

At the beginning of the nineteenth century Bengal had a network of local elementary schools. These schools, known as *patshalas*, imparted secular instruction geared to the needs of the local community. The mode of operation of the *patshalas* was dictated by local convenience and was quite different from that of 'modern' schooling.

Until the Education Despatch of 1854 *patshalas* continued to function in their traditional way undisturbed by official intervention. But after that date, policy changed and the Bengal Government set out to extend government control over the *patshalas* so as to use them as the basis for a system of mass elementary education. The central theme of this book is to outline the ways in which the *patshalas* were subjected to government control and to assess the effects which that control had on them.

The book, therefore, presents a detailed investigation of the nature of education given in the *patshalas* in the later nineteenth century. The study entails a close examination of the actual learning process in *Patshalas*; of what was taught and how it was taught. The book shows how, as a result of government involvement, the *patshala* was divided between those which continued to operate on traditional lines (and had little or no support) and those which accepted innovations incorporating European ideas of schooling and received government, and increasingly local support. These changes had significant implications for the rural community; the new *patshalas* were increasingly the preserve of the richer sections of the community and the poorer and less privileged were left without any effective access to elementary instruction.

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KAZI SHAHIDULLAH

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The development
of indigenous
elementary education
in Bengal
1854 - 1905



FIRMA KLM PRIVATE LIMITED

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THE DEVELOPMENT OF INDIGENOUS
ELEMENTARY EDUCATION IN BENGAL,
1854—1905

KAZI SHAHIDULLAH



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DEDICATION

Dedicated to my parents as a token of gratitude
that was always felt but never expressed.

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PREFACE

From late medieval times, at least, Bengal had a system of elementary education which was supported by, and catered to the needs of, the local communities of the region. The institutions which comprised this system of elementary education, the *patshalas*, were not schools in the modern sense of that term. They were educational institutions which imparted practical instruction in a long-standing and well-understood way. In the later nineteenth century, this indigenous elementary education system was subjected to various measures of "reform" by the Bengal Government as the Government sought to control it ; to use it for its own purposes ; and to improve the type and form of instruction given in the *patshalas*.

This book sets out to determine the purpose of the Government's measures ; and to assess the way in which, and the extent to which, the *patshalas* were changed by these measures. The book thus attempts to make a detailed and systematic study of change in the key sector of Bengal's indigenous elementary education system in the later nineteenth century. The book looks at the nature of instruction given in the *Patshalas* before and after Government involvement. To do this it examines closely the teaching process in the *patshala* : what was taught ; and how efficiently it was taught. The curriculum followed ; the background, qualifications and training of the teachers employed in *patshalas* ; the teaching methods used ; and the system of discipline followed, have all been studied and evaluated.

The first chapter presents the setting for the study. Chapter II attempts to establish the *patshala* as it operated before 1854. Chapters III to VI deal with the different ways in which the government attempted to extend its control over the *patshalas* and analyse the significance of the various reforms introduced. The concluding

chapter reviews the educational development of the period and highlights the findings of this study.

It should be noted at the outset that in Bengal in this period, in addition to the *patshalas*, there was another type of indigenous elementary institution, the *maktab*. The *patshalas* were set up and taught mainly by Hindus and the nature of instruction given was practical and secular. As such, the *patshalas* were attended largely by Hindus but also by Muslims as well. The medium of instruction adopted in the *patshalas* was invariably the local vernacular language, i. e., Bengali in the Bengali-speaking areas. *Maktab*s, on the other hand, were founded and attended almost exclusively by Muslims and gave basically Koranic education. These schools, being religious in character, were less amenable to ideas of change and extremely difficult to penetrate by external forces. Of the two forms of schooling available, *patshalas* were the more dominant and the more popular since they catered to the practical needs of the community. Being secular in character, the *patshalas* were also more open to outside influences and they were the ones to be first taken up by the Bengal Government in their plan of educational reform. By the late nineteenth century, *maktab*s, too, were being pressurized by the Bengal Government to submit to departmental reforms; but the Government's overriding concern was with the control and improvement of the *patshalas*. Throughout the nineteenth century, the priority of the Government remained with the *patshalas* which it tried to remodel on Government lines.

Because of the greater importance of the *patshalas* in this period, no study of the development of the *maktab*s is undertaken in this book. The value of a study of the teaching and learning process in the *maktab*s, and subsequent changes induced in them, is certainly not underestimated. Rather it is recognized implicitly that the *maktab*s need to be the subject of a separate investigation. In this book, the concern is wholly with the *patshalas* and the term 'indigenous elementary education' has been used to denote the elementary aspect of education as given in the *patshalas* alone. And, since the language of education in the *patshalas* was the local

vernacular, the term has been used synonymously with vernacular education as well. The study is confined to 'Bengal Proper' only where the prevailing language was Bengali. Hence the study relates to only those *patshalas* using Bengali as the medium of language.

It must also be noted here that, in the early decades of the nineteenth century, apart from the indigenous elementary schools, a different set of elementary schools were also functioning in Bengal. These elementary schools were established through the activities of the Missionaries and Anglo-Indian societies. These privately developed, non-indigenous, elementary schools are not included in the scope of this study and are discussed only in so far as they are considered relevant to the main theme of the book.

In recent years, two other works have been undertaken which deal with the subject of indigenous education in Bengal. The first thesis, *History of Vernacular Education in Bengal, 1800-1854* (submitted to Calcutta University in 1964 and subsequently published in 1974 by Bharati Book Stall, Calcutta), by N. L. Basak ends where this study begins. Moreover, Basak's work is not confined to elementary indigenous education alone but also covers non-indigenous elementary schools as well, i. e., those schools set up by the Missionaries and Anglo-Indian Societies. The second work, *Indigenous Education in Bengal : 1835-1882*, undertaken at Jadavpur University, Calcutta, by Sheela Bose is concerned mainly with government policy and like that of Dr. Basak is not limited to elementary education only. Dr. Sheela Bose's work covers Middle Vernacular Schools and Female education as well ; only a single chapter is devoted to developments in elementary education for the period after 1854. Furthermore, Dr. Bose's thesis covers only to 1882. It therefore contains no discussion of educational developments following the recommendations of the Education Commission of 1882.

This work differs considerably from those outlined above. Although the subject matter is similar in that all are concerned with indigenous vernacular education, the treatment of that subject is quite different. Unlike the others, this work is confined to indigenous

elementary education. Its approach is also different as it is concerned not merely with governmental policy but also with determining what actually went on in these schools and how these schools were affected in their teaching and organisation by governmental reforming measures. Moreover, this study continues investigation up to 1905. To date, no work has been undertaken on the period 1882 to 1905. In this respect, the present work attempts to break new ground.

The book is focussed on the period 1854 to 1905 on account of two important considerations. Wood's Educational despatch of 1854 was a landmark in the educational history of India since it marked the beginning of direct government involvement in elementary education. Hence the year 1854 constitutes the starting point for the study. The book surveys the period up to 1905, at which date, for administrative and political reasons, Bengal was partitioned into two provinces, 'Bengal' and 'East Bengal and Assam'. The new province, Eastern Bengal and Assam, included a considerable portion of the Bengali-speaking area of the former Presidency which constituted 'Bengal Proper'. The period 1854 to 1905, therefore, allows one to examine Bengal Proper as affected by measures drawn up by one and the same education department, a procedure which is not possible between 1905 and 1912 because the new province had its own, separate educational machinery for developing its policies.

The most important documentary sources for the research were the official records of the Government of Bengal, i. e., Proceedings of departments, Original Consultations, Letters and Despatches to and from the Court of Directors and Reports of Public Instruction. These records I have consulted at the West Bengal State Archives in Calcutta. The West Bengal Secretariat Library at Calcutta, the National Library of India at Calcutta and the Bangladesh Secretariat Library at Dhaka all have valuable collections of published material on education. For Bengali materials, the Bangiya Sahitya Library at Calcutta is a mine of information. I also found the Jaykrishna Public Library at Utterpara (West Bengal) to be useful as it

contained some reports of public instruction not available in Calcutta. Here, I would like to point out that the original sources consulted were not always available in an unbroken series. In particular, the Reports on Public Instruction were not traceable for all years.

I would also like to make clear that wherever applicable I have used the current spelling for the names of places, e. g., Dacca as Dhaka. I have also substituted the old names of districts by its modern usage, e. g., Barisal for Backergunje. Words which are common in Indian English, e. g., zamindar, pundit, etc., have been left unitalicized. Local Bengali words unfamiliar to English usage, however, have been italicized.

This book has developed out of my Ph.D. thesis done at the university of western Australia. The funding for the study was derived from three sources and I acknowledge gratefully their support : The University of Western Australia granted me a full time research studentship for the entire period of this work ; the Department of History, University of Western Australia, provided funds enabling me to undertake a full year's research in India and Bangladesh ; and my father, Kazi Mahbubullah, spent a considerable sum to make life easier for me and my family than possible under the scholarship grant.

My greatest debt however, is to Professor Peter Reeves, not merely for his close supervision and valuable comments, but also for the cheerful manner and patient kindness with which he guided me throughout the entire preparation of this work. I am also indebted to the Directors, Librarians, and Staff of the different depositories in which I worked for their co-operation and assistance. Thanks are also due to the Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, Calcutta, for accepting me officially as a Visiting Scholar and helping with accommodation. Professor Barun De acted as my temporary supervisor during my year of research in Calcutta and I am grateful for his valuable advice. I have also benefitted much from discussions with friends and colleagues in Perth, Calcutta and Dhaka. I am grateful to the University of Dhaka for granting me study leave to undertake this work. My parents not only extended financial support,

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Department of History
University of Dhaka
January, 1987

Kazi Shahidullah



BENGAL

Bengali-Speaking Divisions

- I. Burdwan
- II. Presidency
- III. Rajshahi
- IV. Dhaka
- V. Chittagong

CHAPTER I

THE SETTING

The nineteenth century Bengal Presidency included within its boundary the regions of Bengal Proper, Bihar and Orissa.¹ Each of these regions had its own distinct principal language: Bengali in Bengal proper, Hindi in Bihar and Oriya in Orissa. The Lieutenant-Governor, who was directly responsible to the Governor-General, headed the government which administered all these regions. In that administration, the Lt-Governor was assisted by a provincial secretariat. In so far as the educational affairs of the presidency were concerned, all the regions were controlled from a single education department in Calcutta headed by the Director of Public Instruction, and assisted by an Inspector, Deputy-Inspectors, and a hierarchy of local education officers.

Although the language of Bengal Proper was Bengali, the population did not conform to a single religion but were almost equally divided into Hindus and Muslims. According to the Census of 1901, in Bengal Proper, of the total population approximately 51.6 percent were Muslims and 46.5 percent Hindus (the remainder of the population was composed of small groups of Christians, Buddhists, Parsees, and Jews). There were more Muslims to the east (Dhaka and Chittagong divisions) and north (Rajshahi division); and more Hindu to the west of the region (Presidency and Burdwan divisions).

Nineteenth century Bengal was an overwhelmingly rural society. The Census of 1901 showed that 95 percent of the population lived in the villages and only 5 percent in towns. There were no large

1. 'Bengal Proper' roughly implied the country east of the Bhagirathi and Mahananda, where the prevalent language was Bengali. *Imperial Gazetteer*, 1907-9, VII, p. 195.

towns with the exception of Calcutta and Dhaka. The *patshalas*, with which this thesis is concerned, were overwhelmingly rural *patshalas*: their area of operation was the village and their roots were firmly entrenched in the village.

Since the majority of the population was living in the villages, most of the people were engaged in agricultural pursuits. Agriculture constituted the mainstay of Bengal's economy and the Census of 1901 showed that about 71.5 percent of the population of Bengal were living off agriculture. Nineteenth century Bengali society was essentially an agrarian society. The ownership of the land was confined to a small elite of landlords (*zamindars*) and rich farmers (*jotedars*) while the majority toiled as share-croppers (*bargadars*) and agricultural labourers (*krishaks*). Nine-tenths of the *zamindaris* were held by high caste Hindus. The Muslims and low caste Hindus formed the bulk of Bengal's illiterate peasant population. Small holdings, labour-intensive farming through sharecroppers and bonded labourers, and the master-serf type of relationship between *jotedar* and *bargadar* persisted throughout the nineteenth century.²

Hindu society in Bengal was divided into a number of hierarchically arranged groups: Brahmins; and clean, unclean and untouchable Sudra castes. In nineteenth century Bengal, Brahmins, Kayasthas, and Vaidyas formed the upper castes. These higher castes were engaged mainly in non-menial occupations like medicine, law, education, land-owning or land management and had a much higher rate of literacy than the country's average.³

Apart from religious and caste divisions, Bengal society was also socially stratified into two classes, the *bhadralok* and *Chotolok*. *Bhadralok* literally meant 'gentleman' or 'respectable' person and was usually applicable to those persons engaged in landed, professional or clerical occupations.⁴ *Chotolok* implied 'small person' and

2. Ratnalekha Ray, *Change in Bengal Agrarian Society: 1760-1850*, Manohar, New Delhi, 1979, p. 286.

3. N. K. Bose, *Modern Bengal*, Vidyodaya Library Private Ltd., Calcutta, 1959, p. 29.

4. Marcus F. Franda, *Radical Politics in West Bengal*, The M. I. T. Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, and London, 1971, p. 7.

the term was generally used to describe the vast multitude engaged in manual labour. The *bhadralok* constituted the elite of Bengali society and occupied a privileged position in the community.

Thus, Bengali society in the nineteenth century was divided along religious, caste and economic lines. A typical Bengali village had a mixed Hindu/Muslim population. The small local elite group comprised the zamindar, *jotedar*, money-lender, rich trader and other well-to-do people. The largest proportion of the village population were engaged in farming : a few who were peasants with tenancy rights (*raiya*s) and the great majority who were sharecroppers and agricultural labourers. A portion of the population were also engaged in commercial work as zamindar's agents or as small traders or running small business such as grocery shop. Again, there would be some involved in services such as tailoring and barbering. And, of course every village would have its Hindu priest and Muslim *maulvi* to fulfil religious needs. This was the community whose educational needs were being catered to by the *patshalas*. Since it was a community composed of heterogeneous elements, the *patshalas* which operated in it had to meet the diverse interests of these various elements. It is in this context that this study of the effects of change in the *patshala* is set.

CHAPTER II

BENGALI PATSHALA EDUCATION IN THE EARLY NINETEENTH CENTURE

The purpose of this chapter is to present a detailed picture of how *patshalas* functioned in Bengal in the first half of the nineteenth century. During this period, *patshalas* operated in their own way and were not subjected to governmental reforming measures. The attempts at change came in the later part of the nineteenth century when the government devised various measures to control and improve (as they saw it) the education provided by the indigenous *patshalas*. To understand fully the significance of the reforming measures adopted in the later nineteenth century, one has to ascertain first the character of the *patshalas* before the reforms set in. Only then will one be in a position to appreciate the nature of the change involved. This chapter will, therefore, concentrate on showing how the Bengali *patshala* operated in the early nineteenth century period. It will discuss the nature of instruction given in the *patshalas*; the background and qualification of the teachers; and the teaching methods employed to instruct children. The general organizational pattern of the *patshalas* will be examined, relationship of the *patshalas* to caste or community groups will be assessed, regional variations, if any, will be noted, and an overall view of the place of the *patshala* in the village will be drawn.

The chapter itself is divided into two parts. The first part will concentrate on establishing how the *patshalas* functioned in the first half of the nineteenth century. The second part will focus on the treatment given to the *patshalas* in the same period by the Bengal government; reformers, both Bengali and British; and Missionaries. The attitudes and policies of these different groups

towards the *patshalas* will be examined and the effects of their activities on the *patshalas* will be assessed. This will enable us to draw a reliable picture of the *patshala* as it existed on the eve of the Education Despatch of 1854.

The source material for constructing a reliable picture of *patshala* education in the early nineteenth century is limited. There is little direct evidence to rely upon except for Dr. Francis Buchanan's survey (1807-1814) and the Reports of William Adam (1835-1838). The Buchanan and Adam reports throw valuable light on the indigenous educational system and constitute the main source for the educational picture of the period.

The Buchanan reports were the outcome of a statistical survey of some districts of Bengal, Bihar, and Assam conducted between 1807 and 1814. The Bengal districts surveyed were Dinajpur and Rangpur.¹ Buchanan's report was not concerned with education alone and dealt also with presenting a geographical and historical background of the district as well.² Education constituted only a chapter of his report and gives us a general picture of the working of the *patshalas*. However, the information given is insufficient to construct a reliable picture of the state of vernacular education prevailing in Bengal at the time. Buchanan's report is important mainly because it supplements information given in Adam.

In contrast to Buchanan, Adam's reports were focussed entirely on education and presented a much more detailed and exhaustive survey. As such, it constitutes, by far, the most important source of information for building up a picture of education in the period.

Between 1835 and 1838, William Adam, a Scottish missionary, under instructions of Lord William Bentinck conducted a survey of the state of education in Bengal. The purpose of the survey was to

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1. I have been able to examine only the Report on Dinajpur. The Report on Rangpur is missing and unavailable. Even Adam, in his report, mentioned that Buchanan's chapter on the state of education in Rangpur is missing.
 2. W. Francis Buchanan, *A Geographical, Statistical, and Historical Description of the District, or Zila of Dinajpur in the Province or Soubah of Bengal*, Baptist Mission Press, Calcutta, 1833.

determine the actual state of education in the country. The three voluminous reports of Adam provide a valuable and interesting picture of the educational condition of the people of Bengal.³ Adam's 'First Report' is a compilation from various sources of all that had been previously ascertained on the subject of education in Bengal. The 'Second Report' is a detailed study of the state of education in the Natore sub-division of Rajshahi district. The 'Third Report' presents a view of the state of instruction in the District and City of Murshidabad, in the Districts of Birbhum, Burdwan, and Midnapur in Bengal (and also in the Districts of South Bihar and Tirhoot in Bihar—which fall outside our area of concern). Thus, we can see, that the Buchanan and Adam reports cover the Bengal districts of Dinajpur, Rangpur, Rajshahi, Murshidabad, Birbhum, Burdwan, and Midnapur. That is, the reports refer to Northern and Western Bengal only, no such survey being undertaken for Eastern Bengal.

A. *The Patshala Before 1854*

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, there existed in Bengal a fairly widespread network of village schools providing general elementary instruction. These indigenous institutes, known popularly as *patshalas*, were not confined to any particular area, but were available in all regions of Bengal, though their numbers varied from place to place.⁴ It is not possible to state accurately the exact number of *patshalas* in existence as no such attempt has ever been undertaken. Adam estimated that two out of three villages possessed a *patshala*, and he calculated that since officially there

3. Adam submitted his three Reports at different times. The first report was dated 1 July 1835, the second 23 December, 1835, and the third report April, 1838.

See W. Adam, *Reports on the State of Education in Bengal (1835 and 1838)*, ed., Anathanath Basu, University of Calcutta, Calcutta, 1941, p. xxiv, hereafter Adam.

4. Adam's First Report, which is a compilation from various sources of all that had been previously ascertained on the state of education, indicates that *patshalas* were operating in Eastern Bengal as well. See Adam, pp. 82-92.

were 150,746 villages in Bengal and Bihar, this meant that there were 100,000 such schools in existence at the time in Bengal and Bihar.⁵ Although Adam's estimate of 100,000 indigenous schools cannot be fully substantiated, yet it does indicate that *patshalas* were extensively prevalent throughout the countryside.⁶

Patshalas were not uniformly distributed and their numbers varied from district to district. Table II. 1 will illustrate the point for those districts for which figures are available :

TABLE II. 1 : DISTRIBUTION OF PATSHALAS

District	Population in 1801*	Patshalas**	Number of persons to a patshala
Midnapur	1,500,000	518	2,895.7
Murshidabad	1,020,572	62	16,460.8
Birbhum	700,000	407	1,719.9
Burdwan	1,444,487	629	2,296.4
Dinajpur	3,000,000	119	25,210.0

* The population figures are approximates and given in Adam, pp. 50, 58, 97, 110.

The population figures for Burdwan is for the year 1813-14, and for Dinajpur 1808.

** I have taken Bengali schools as implying *patshalas*.

Source : Compiled from the Reports of Adam and Buchanan.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 7.

6. Adam's estimate subsequently sparked a debate between different scholars. Some argued that Adam's contention of 100,000 *patshalas* in Bengal was a 'myth' lacking in substance while others held that it was substantially correct. For details of the differing views of the debate, see Philip Hartog, *Some Aspects of Indian Education, Past and Present*, Oxford University Press, 1939.

R. V. Parulekar, *Literacy in India in Pre-British Days*, Aryabhusan Press, Bombay, 1940.

Anathanath Basu, "Literacy in Bengal in Early British Period", *Modern Review*, August, 1939.

The table shows the distribution of *patshalas* to be very unequal. Burdwan recorded the highest number of *patshalas* and Murshidabad the least. But when compared to population, Birbhum emerges as the leading district having more *patshalas* to total population than any other district. Murshidabad and Dinajpur had a much smaller number of *patshalas* than the other districts. The difference in performance between the different districts is very wide. Thus, Birbhum district had one *patshala* for every 1,719 persons, whereas Dinajpur recorded one *patshala* for every 25,210 persons. This can also be taken as indicating that Northern Bengal (as represented by Dinajpur in this instance) had fewer *patshalas* than Western Bengal (all the other districts involved belong to West Bengal). Unfortunately, we do not have any figures for Eastern Bengal districts and hence we cannot draw a picture for the whole of Bengal. What does, however, clearly emerge from the table is that the proportion of existing *patshalas* varied considerably between different districts with some districts being much more well-endowed with *patshalas* than others.

There was no uniformity regarding the size of the *patshalas* either. Enrolment varied from region to region, place to place, and locality to locality. Unlike modern educational institutions, *patshalas* were not subjected to any hard and fast student enrolment limitations. These were left to be determined by local factors, e. g. , the economic condition of the people, the demand for education, or the ability of the teacher. Thus, Buchanan noted that in the district towns the average number of scholars was much higher than in the countryside.⁷ Adam's statistics showed that in Mursidabad the average number of pupils to a *patshala* was 16.1, in Birbhum it was 15.4, and in Burdwan 20.9.⁸ These figures conceal considerable local differences. Thus, the same district often contained *patshalas* having an average of 20 or more pupils as well as *patshalas* with less than 12 pupils.⁹

7. Buchanan, p. 80.

8. Adam, pp. 230, 236, 240.

9. Buchanan, p. 80.

There was also no limitation to the number of *patshalas* that could be set up in any village. The number of *patshalas* to a village varied depending on local consideration. Thus, while one could find villages with no *patshalas*, there were also at the same time many villages having more than one *patshala*.¹⁰ *Patshalas* were generally started on the basis of demand for education and the ability of the people to sustain it and these factors determined the number of *patshalas* to a village.

Patshalas were usually set up in one of the following three ways : a *patshala* could be established through the support of a local wealthy family whose children would form its principal pupils ; a *patshala* could be established through general subscription and support of the local community ; or a *patshala* could be set up by the teacher himself. *Patshalas* normally did not have a proper school-house and classes were generally conducted in the house of the teacher, village temple or out house of one of the parents, the corner of a shop, the portico of a mosque, or even under the shade of a tree.¹¹ Sometimes, however, attempts would be made to erect a school-house through the combined effort of the teacher, pupils and parents of scholars. In such cases, the expenses would usually be raised by general subscription or donation from the wealthy and the scholars would assist by giving their labour.¹²

The teachers of the *patshalas* were called *gurus*. The hereditary profession of the Kayastha or writer caste was teaching and most *patshala gurus* belonged to this group. Table II. 2, on the following page, will present the caste composition of *patshala gurus*.

This table raises some interesting points. It is clear that the *patshalas* were manned by a single teacher. Burdwan shows ten teachers in excess because the figure includes nine missionary schools and one school supported by the Raja of Burdwan which had two

10. Lal Behari Day, *Bengal Peasant Life, Folk Tales of Bengal, Recollection of My School Days*, ed., Mahadevprasad Saha, Editions Indian, Calcutta, 1969, *Bengal Peasant Life*, p. 51.

11. Adam, p. 230.

12. *Ibid.*

TABLE II. 2 : CASTE COMPOSITION OF PATSHALA GURUS

District	Total* <i>Patshala</i>	Number of teachers	Average age of teachers	Brahmins	Kayasthas	Muslims	Others** (low caste Hindus)
Murshidabad	67	67	44.3	14	39	1	13
Birbhum	412	412	39.3	86	256	4	65
Burdwan	629	639	39.05	107	369	9	151

* The total *patshala* figures for Murshidabad and Birbhum varies from Table II, 1. Five Hindi *patshalas* existed in both these districts, which were not included in previous table but have been shown in this table.

** There was also 1 Christian teacher in Birbhum and 3 Christian teachers in Burdwan as well.

Source : Compiled from W. Adam, *Reports on the State of Education in Bengal (1835 and 1838)*, ed., Anathanath Basu, University of Calcutta, Calcutta, 1941.

teachers each.¹³ Most of the *gurus* could be considered to be middle aged as the average age hovered around 40. Averages are very rough indicators and it was not uncommon to find both relatively young and older men engaged in *patshala* teaching.

The caste composition of the teachers show that the Kayasthas constituted the majority of the teachers. It ought to be noted, too, that other castes, both superior and inferior to the Kayasthas were also making inroads into the teaching profession. In fact, many inferior castes like Kalu, Sunri, Dhoba, Malo and Chandal who were generally thought to be excluded from being associated with instruction in letters and learning were serving as teachers. There were some Muslim and Christian teachers too, and we can safely conclude that the *gurus* of the *patshalas* could belong to any caste or religion, although the overwhelming majority were recruited from Kayasthas.

The caste composition of the *gurus* also shows that teaching in the *patshalas* was often hereditary, handed down to the son from the father, who took control of the *patshala* on the father's death or incapacity.¹⁴ Alternatively, *patshalas* could be opened by newcomers as well, from other castes and occupations, possessing the necessary knowledge, and willing to make a living out of teaching.

Gurus did not have to undertake any formal course in teacher-training. Anybody who had studied or passed through a *patshala* course, or had acquired sufficient knowledge of *patshala* subjects privately, could become a *guru*. A successful *guru* would have to demonstrate command over *patshala* subjects to attract pupils or else enrolment could drop. This would be particularly true for areas where more than one *patshala* was operating. In such cases, the better and more efficient teacher would inevitably draw pupils away from the weaker school.

Since there was no public provision for them, the *gurus* were dependent entirely on the scholars for their subsistence.¹⁵ The

13. *Ibid.*, p. 238.

14. Lal Behari Day, *Bengal Peasant Life*, p. 51.

15. Buchanan, p. 80.

fees charged varied not only between different places but were determined by a variety of factors. The *patshala* course was divided into several stages (I will be discussing the different stages later on) and the *guru* charged each pupil according to the stage in which he was placed. Also, rich parents were generally charged more than the children of the poor, and sometimes the very poor were taught gratuitously.

The *gurus* received their remuneration in various ways. Some were paid monthly wages by one person; others received monthly fees in cash from each scholar; and yet others received partial payment in fees or wages and the remainder in perquisites of various kinds, consisting of uncooked food items (*sidha*), clothing, and presents during holiday, religious and social festivals.¹⁶ Since perquisites played an important part of the *guru's* payment, it is difficult to ascertain accurately the income of a *guru*. The following table will give a rough idea of the *guru's* income and is based on a calculation of both cash and perquisites earned.

TABLE II. 3 : INCOME OF GURU

District	Income per month			
	Rs	—	As	— p
Murshidabad	4	—	12	— 9
Birbhum	3	—	3	— 9
Burdwan	3	—	4	— 3

Source : W. Adam, *Reports on the State of Education in Bengal (1835 and 1838)*, ed., Anathanath Basu, University of Calcutta, Calcutta, 1941, p. 250.

Gurus in Murshidabad were relatively better off than those of Birbhum and Burdwan. Generally, *gurus* of town *patshalas* earned much more than those in the villages and Buchanan stated that in the towns of Dinajpur and Malda, the average monthly income of the *gurus* was around Rs 7-8 annas, whereas in country places

16. Adam, p. 229.

the average monthly income was only Rs 1-14 annas.¹⁷ From the table, it would appear that the average income of the *guru* was around the Rs 3-8 annas mark but, as Buchanan has shown, this income could also vary considerably between different *patshalas* of the same district with some *gurus* enjoying incomes nearly four times higher than others.

Adam's computation of the income of other people (performing nearly similar duties on work which the *gurus* could be expected to perform as well) showed that the *Patwari* (who collected the zamindar's rents) got about Rs 2-8 annas to Rs 3 a month; the village *Amin* (who on behalf of the zamindar settled local disputes and measured their grounds) received Rs 3-8 annas to Rs 4 a month; the *Shumarnavis* (who kept accounts of the collection of rents) got about Rs 5 per month; and the *Khamarnavis* (whose job was to ascertain the state and value of the crops on which the zamindar has claim in kind) received a similar income of around Rs 5 a month.¹⁸ The village *guru* does not appear to have been much disadvantaged when compared to these professions. However, as Adam pointed out, the other professions had the opportunities of making unauthorized gains and they enjoyed a respectability and influence which the *guru* did not have, and hence they were better off than the school master.¹⁹ Both Adam and Buchanan considered the *gurus* to be poorly rewarded and many, who could not manage from their teaching income, took to side work engaging sometimes in farming, in money-lending, in weaving, in retail-trade, in temple-work and other services in order to supplement their income.²⁰

The instruction imparted in the *patshalas* was generally of a secular character: reading, writing, arithmetic, letter-writing, a little Sanskrit grammar, versified Puranic tales and *zamindari* and

17. Buchanan, p. 80.

18. Adam, p. 141.

19. *Ibid.*

20. *Ibid.*, pp. 140, 240.

Also see Buchanan, p. 80.

mahajani accounts. *Zamindari* or 'agricultural' accounts taught mainly the calculation of the area of land and the form of revenue accounts for a given quantity of land. *Mahajani* or 'commercial' accounts taught how to work out the interest of money and how to calculate the value of articles at a given price.²¹

Normally no printed books were used in the *patshalas* and even manuscript text books were unknown to most of these institutes.²² Pupils were taught mainly through the oral tradition where exercises were dictated by the teacher and learnt by dint of rote memory. Table 11.4 shows the number of *patshalas* using native written works.

TABLE II. 4 : PATSHALAS USING WRITTEN WORKS

	<i>Patshalas</i> using written works	<i>Patshalas</i> not using written works
Murshidabad	39	28
Birbhum	13	398
Burdwan	426	198

Source : W. Adam, *Reports on the State Education in Bengal (1835 and 1838)*, ed., Anathanath Basu, University of Calcutta, Calcutta, 1941, p. 253.

The table shows that of a total of 1102 *patshalas*, 624 were not using written works. A majority of the *patshalas* were being conducted entirely without the help of any written work. The nature of the written works employed varied. There was no uniform set of work to be followed, and the syllabus was at the discretion of the *guru*; he taught what he knew best. The written works used by the *patshala gurus* were mainly religious and moral or grammatical

21. For detailed discussion of *zamindari* / *mahajani* accounts, see Adam, pp. 144-145.

22. Adam, p. 142.

After the formation of Calcutta School Book Society in 1818, some of the Society's books and other books published by the Serampore Baptists were being used in some *patshalas*. Evidence of this is given in Adam, p. 233.

in nature, Adam provided a list of some of the written works being used in the *patshalas*. Of these, *Saraswati Bandana* (salutation to the Goddess of Learning), *Ganga Bandana* (worship of the Ganges), *Yugadha Bandana* (worship of Goddess Durga), and *Chanakya Slokas* (praises of learning and precepts of morality) clearly dealt with the theme of religion and morality; *Subda Subanta* (rules of Sanskrit orthography), *Ashta Dhatu* and *Ashta Sabdi* (two Sanskrit treatises, the former on conjugation of roots and the latter on declension of nouns) were grammatical works; and *Guru Bandana* (composition stressing on the need of respect and devotion from pupil to his teacher) and *Guru Dakshina* (compositions of songs for raising donations for the master) were meant to glorify the position of the *guru* and command total obedience from the pupils. These works were generally used only as texts for language learning and intended to inculcate moral and spiritual values in young minds.²³

Arithmetic constituted a major subject in the *patshala* curriculum. Pupils were taught in stages to learn the Cowrie Table, the Numeration Table up to 100, the Katha Table (a land-measure table), the Ser Table (a dry-measure table), the general rhyming arithmetic rules of Subhankar devoted to practices and modes of calculation based on native methods, and finally addition and subtraction. Multiplication and division were not taught as separate rules but were effected by using addition and subtraction with the aid of a multiplication table which extended to the number 20.²⁴ It was only after pupils reached this stage that classes were divided into *zamindari* or *mahajani*.

Not all *patshala gurus* were capable of teaching both *zamindari* and *mahajani* accounts. The *gurus* normally taught what they knew best and often there were *patshalas* where either *zamindari* or *mahajani* was being taught. *Zamindari* accounts were generally preferred by children of agriculturists and *mahajani* accounts by money-lenders and shop-keepers. Table II.5 shows the extent to which the study of the different accounts was practised.

23. N. L. Basak, *History of Vernacular Education in Bengal 1800-1854*, Bharati Book Stall, Calcutta, 1974, p. 43.

24. Adam, p. 144.

TABLE II. 5 : PATSHALAS AND ZAMINDARI / MAHAJANI ACCOUNTS

	Zamindari accounts only	Mahajani accounts only	Both Zamindari and Mahajani accounts
Murshidabad	14	7	46
Birbhum	47	36	328
Burdwan	5	2	609

Source : W. Adam, *Reports on the State of Education in Bengal (1835 and 1838)*, ed., Anathanath Basu, University of Calcutta, Calcutta, 1941, p. 252.

The table shows that while most preferred to learn both forms of accounting, there was a slightly higher demand for *zamindari* than for *mahajani* accounts. *Zamindari* and *mahajani* accounts were no doubt popular *patshala* subjects being related to the practical needs of the population. Even then, one could also sometimes come across *patshalas* where the *guru* was unable to teach either of the two accounts. Thus, the Table II. 5 figures for Bardwan shows the practice of *zamindari/mahajani* accounts in 616 *patshalas* whereas there were actually 629 *patshalas* in Burdwan (see Table II. 1) This implies that 13 *patshalas* in Burdwan were not offering instruction in either *zamindari* or *mahajani* accounts.

The *patshalas* also put much stress on letter-writing and pupils were taught the various modes of addressing different persons, composing business letters, petitions, grants, leases, acceptances, and notes of hand. As can be seen, the *patshala* curriculum was extremely practical and geared to the day-to-day needs of the society.

As mentioned earlier, the method of instruction in the *patshala* was based largely on oral work. The *patshala* course was organized into four distinct stages according to the different materials used for writing :

- (a) in the first stage, pupils spent about eight to ten days tracing vowels and consonants on the ground with a stick ;

- (b) the second stage lasted between two and a half to four years and was spent writing on the palm leaf learning to join vowels to consonants, forming compound letters, and learning tables of numeration, money, weight, and measures ;
- (c) next, children were promoted to the plantain leaf stage where arithmetic, simple cases of the mensuration of land and commercial and agricultural accounts were taught. This course usually extended from two to three years ;
- (d) in the final stage, scholars were allowed to write on paper and were further instructed in agricultural and commercial accounts, in the composition of different types of letters, and taught a little Sanskrit grammar.²⁵

The language of instruction used in the *patshalas* was generally Bengali.²⁶ Scholars often entered the *patshalas* at the early age of five years and the period spent at school usually lasted between six to nine years depending on the ability of the individual pupil.

Since the *patshalas* were staffed by a single teacher, the *guru* had to manage all by himself the pupils in the different stages. There was no distinct classrooms for the different grades and all pupils sat together under the same roof or tree. To assist in teaching efficiently, the *gurus* often appointed monitors, locally called '*Sardar Podos*' from among the senior and better pupils. The '*Sardar Podos*' or Head Boys were expected to help in maintaining discipline and instructing junior scholars. An important characteristic of *patshala* teaching was the method of 'chorus recital' where the *Guru* or Head Boy recited a verse or a table from memory and the other pupils repeated the same all together in a thundering voice.²⁷

The *patshalas* did not have any fixed class-routine, time-table or school calendar. Pupils could join the *patshala* any time of the year. There was no annual examination date and pupils were

25. *Ibid.*, pp. 143-145.

Also Buchanan, p. 81.

26. Even in the Bengali speaking districts, there were sometimes a small number of *patshalas* using Hindi or other language to cater to the minority non-Bengali population.

27. Basak, p. 41.

promoted to a higher stage whenever the *guru* was satisfied of the scholars' attainments. The use of slates was unknown and no register of attendance was maintained. There were no desks, benches or blackboards and no fixed seating arrangement for scholars. Those pupils who could afford usually brought a small mat or gunny bag to sit on. The *guru* would generally be seated on a wooden stool in the centre of the school giving him a commanding view of all pupils. *Patshala* classes were normally held in two sessions. The morning session commenced from early morning to around ten o'clock, and the afternoon session resumed at three o'clock lasting till sundown. Timing of the *patshala* hours was so fixed as to be most convenient for the children to attend. Since many *patshalas* were held in the open air under the shade of a tree, the *patshala* hours ensured that the boys would not be for long exposed to the direct rays of the sun. Again, the recess from 10.00 A.M. to 3.00 P.M. allowed pupils to go home to take a bath, to have lunch, and to do odd household chores such as taking lunch to the father working in the fields, looking after cows or feeding chickens. Since the *patshalas* did not have any fixed school calender, they were completely flexible in operation, opening and closing according to local convenience, e. g. *patshalas* were often closed during harvesting seasons, floods or other natural calamities. ²⁸

Discipline was strictly enforced in the *patshalas* ; so much so, that the *guru* was often looked upon as an object of terror by the pupils. The bamboo cane or stick was freely used and other severe forms of punishment were also applied to force even the most recalcitrant pupil into total submission. The *guru* was the supreme authority in the *patshala* and no defiance of instruction was tolerated. All *patshala* pupils and their families were well known to the *guru* and each pupil received individual attention. Any pupil intentionally absenting from *patshala* classes for no genuine reason was severely dealt with by the *guru*. In such cases, senior boys (*Sardar Podos*) would be

28. For a glimpse of *patshala* life, see :
 Lal Behari Day, *Bengal Peasant Life*, pp. 51-56, 79-83 ;
Recollections of My School Days, pp. 451-458.

despatched to locate and forcibly bring back the truant who would be accordingly thrashed to ensure no repetition of such behaviour.²⁹

Despite the harsh treatment, there generally existed a strong bond between the *guru* and his pupils. Their relationship was in many respects akin to that between a father and son. The Bengalis believed in 'spare the rod and spoil the child' and the *guru's* disciplinary measures were accepted by the community as a necessity for the eventual benefit of the child. The *guru* was a father figure to the pupils and they feared him, obeyed him, respected him, and performed odd jobs for him.³⁰

We have seen before that *patshala gurus* were predominantly Kayasthas but people from other castes and religion could become *gurus* as well. Let us now examine the composition of *patshala* pupils and see whether the *patshalas* were closely related to any particular caste or community. (See Table II.6 on the following page.)

Although the majority of the teachers were Kayasthas, the pupils were not drawn mainly from that caste. Rather, the Brahmins contributed the single largest group of *patshala* pupils. However, while there were few lower caste teachers,³¹ a majority of the *patshala* pupils belonged to this group. Pupils of the very inferior castes like Kalu, Dhoba and Chandal were attending in fairly large numbers.³² Muslim and Christian pupils too were attending *patshalas* but they formed a minority, the majority being Hindus.

The *patshala* was thus, a very open institution. It was attended not only by the rich but also by the poor; not only by the upper castes but also by the lower castes; not only by Hindus but also by Muslims and Christians as well. Again, it ought to be noted here that *patshalas* were not divided on religious or caste lines. Thus,

29. For an account of the different forms of punishment used in the *patshalas*, see :

Lal Behari Day, *Bengal Peasant Life*, p. 82 and *Recollections of My School Days*, p. 454.

30. *Ibid.*, pp. 82-83; 454.

31. See Chapter II, Appendix A, for full details of caste break up of teachers.

32. See Chapter II, Appendix B, for full details of caste break up of pupils.

TABLE II, 6 : CASTE AND RELIGIOUS COMPOSITION OF *PATSHALA* PUPILS

	Total number of <i>patshalas</i>	Total number of scholars	Brahmins	Kayasthas	Lower castes	Muslims	Christians
Murshidabad	67	1,080	181	129	688	82	—
Birbhum*	412	6,383	1,853	487	3,785	232	20
Burdwan	629	13,190	3,429	1,846	7,133	769	13

* There were six tribal pupils in Birbhum.

Source : Compiled from W. Adam, *Reports on the State of Education in Bengal (1835 and 1838)*, ed., Anathanath Basu, University of Calcutta, Calcutta, 1:41, pp. 230-231, 236-237, 240-241.

patshalas were not exclusively Hindu or Muslim, upper caste or lower caste. Muslim teachers generally had both Muslim and Hindu pupils (of all castes) and conversely Hindu teachers had pupils of all religion and castes. Pupils of all castes and religion received the same instruction, sitting in the same school-house, from the same teacher, and took part in the same plays and pastimes.³³ It may be noted as well, that all *patshala* pupils and teachers were male, female education being then not considered at all and generally looked upon with contempt.³⁴

Patshalas were extremely practical institutes where children were taught what was then considered to be essential in meeting the practical demands of life. There was no place in the curriculum for history, geography or science. The *patshala* was set up often through the concerted efforts of the community and was an important institution of village life. Its popularity is attested to by the fact that it was attended by people of all walks of life. Even when set up through the liberality of any rich family, the *patshala* did not lose its mass character and remained open to all children of the locality. In fact, children of the very poor were often taught free, a point much appreciated by Adam :

"It gives me great pleasure to mention these instances of unostentatious benevolence [gratuitous instruction] in the humblest ranks of native society. They prove both the merit attached to the communication of knowledge, and the readiness to receive instruction on the part of many who can offer no compensation for it."³⁵

Both Adam and Buchanan were critical of the *patshala* curriculum for its narrow content which did not provide for "high intellectual stimulation" and did not include liberal education. Buchanan felt that the result of the overstress on the teaching of accounts would be "to narrow the mind, to confine its attention to sordid gain, and low

33. Adam, p. 251.

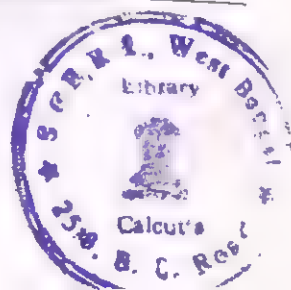
34. Buchanan, p. 81.

35. Adam, p. 229.

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cunning, than to improve the heart and enlarge the understanding."³⁶ However it was realized too, that despite these defects the *patshalas* could be developed into useful seats of popular instruction. As Adam himself pointed out, in spite of their humble character, the *patshalas* were interwoven with the habits and customs of the country for generations past and as such they offered "the simplest, the safest, the most popular and the most economical means" for raising and improving the character of the people.³⁷

Adam and Buchanan both reported that in addition to *patshala* education, many children were given domestic instruction. Also, there were many who received domestic instruction only and did not attend *patshala*. This instruction was usually given by the father, uncle or an elder brother and sometimes even the *gomastha*, in his periodical visit for collection of rent, would give a few lessons to one or more of the children of the village. Adam acknowledged the difficulty of stating accurately the total number of children receiving domestic instruction; but even then he estimated that in the Natore subdivision of Rajshahi district 2,382 children received domestic instruction as compared to 262 children receiving elementary instruction in *patshalas*.³⁸ This indicates that domestic instruction was nearly ten times more prevalent than formal schooling. Pundits and priests confined the domestic instructions of their children to writing and reading, addition and subtraction, with scarcely any of the applications of numbers to agricultural and commercial affairs while farmers and traders naturally limited their instructions to what they best knew, and what was to them and their children of immediate benefit, the calculations and measurements peculiar to their occupations.³⁹ The popularity of domestic instruction stemmed mainly from two reasons: first, poverty prevented many children from attending *patshalas* and hence they received domestic instructions, and, secondly, zamindars

36. Buchanan, pp. 81-82.

37. Adam, p. 349.

38. *Ibid.*, p. 157.

39. *Ibid.*, p. 158.

and high caste Brahmins, conscious of their social position, looked down with disfavour on their children attending *patshalas* with lower class people and therefore hired private tutors to give instructions within the home.⁴⁰ Compared to *patshala* instruction, domestic instruction was necessarily more limited and imperfect and hence was not as highly valued by the general people as institutionalized *patshala* instruction.

Pupils successfully completing the *patshala* course were not awarded with any degree or certificate. Pupils attended *patshalas* not with the hope of being able to move on to a higher position, but to come out better equipped to face the life in which they were placed. Their world was limited to their locality and they learnt how to get along best in that society. There were no pretensions, no lofty ideals and no high thinking. *Patshalas* were set up to serve the interests of the community in their own local way and, as such, were institutes of the people, by the people and for the people. They could hardly be called 'schools' as the modern usage of the term implies. They were not set up as schools of learning but rather as institutes for imparting certain skills (practical skills) adapted to local conditions. Perhaps, it is because of the limited content of the *patshala* course, and the very nature of the instructions given, which avoided elevating the pupils' minds, that the *patshala* generally received strong support from the wealthy sections of the native community. *Patshalas* catered to the needs of all classes without disturbing the balance between the classes and, as such, was tolerated by the dominant sections of the village society.

B. Treatment of the Patshala

The Charter Act of 1813 made the East India Company for the first time responsible for the education of the Indian people and declared that

"it shall be lawful for the Governor General in Council to direct that...a sum of one lac of rupees in each year shall be set apart and applied to the revival and

40. *Ibid.*, p. 159.

improvement of literature and the encouragement of the learned natives in India, and for the introduction and promotion of a knowledge of sciences among the inhabitants of the British territories in India."⁴¹

Hitherto education had been largely neglected by the Company, except for a little patronage of Hindu and Muslim learning; the Act of 1813 directed that more efforts should be made to foster and revive this culture, and that contemporary Western learning should also be introduced.⁴² For the next 22 years these twin aims were officially pursued; the policy can be best summed up as the hope that Western learning could somehow be grafted on to the Hindu and Islamic systems.⁴³ This period ended in 1835, when Bentinck decided that government patronage should be given instead to Western learning through the medium of English.⁴⁴

During the early years of the nineteenth century, three different groups were involved in fostering educational activities. There were a few individual British officials, merchants and army officers who now started to take a keen interest in promoting education of the native people. Although sympathetic to indigenous education, their leaning was mainly towards spread of English learning. This group included men like David Hare, William Butterworth Bayley and Sir Edward Hyde East, then the Chief Justice of Bengal. There was a second group, composed of well-to-do Bengalis in Calcutta, who advocated the introduction of Western sciences for their cultural value. The prominent members of this group were both liberal in religious and social outlook, like Ram Mohun Roy, and conservative, such as Radha Kanta Deb, and their greatest achievement was the foundation of the Hindu College in 1817. The third group were

41. H. Sharp, ed., *Selections Form Educational Records*, Part I, Government of India Press, New Delhi, 1965, p. 19.

42. M. A. Laird, 'The Contribution of Missionaries to Education in Bengal during the Administration of Lord Hastings, 1813-1823', *Bengal Past and Present*, vol. 86, No. 162, (July-December 1967), p. 68, hereafter Laird.

43. B. K. Bohman-Behram, *Educational Controversies in India*, Bombay, 1943, pp. 30-31.

44. Laird, p. 68.

the missionaries, who looked upon education as a means to achieving their ultimate aim of christianization of the country.⁴⁵ Co-operation amongst these groups led to the formation of the Calcutta School Book Society (May 1817) and the Calcutta School Society (September 1818).

The object of the Book Society was 'the preparation, publication and cheap or gratuitous supply of works useful in schools and seminaries of learning.'⁴⁶ Publications in Bengali and English constituted the main attention but even Sanskrit, Arabic, and Persian works received the patronage of the Society. The Bengali publications of the book Society covered a variety of subjects like History, Geography and Astronomy. The publication of cheap class books in the above subjects helped eventually in widening the curriculum prevalent in the traditional *patshalas*.⁴⁷

The aims of the Calcutta School Society were threefold :

"(1) to help and support the indigenous schools in Calcutta in order to effect improvement in them ; (2) to establish some English and Bengali model schools ; and (3) to arrange for the higher education of those who would show proficiencies in studies in the indigenous as well as in the model schools."⁴⁸

The School Society endeavoured to introduce printed instead of manuscript school books and instruction was extended to subjects formerly neglected like Geography and History. The mode of instruction was also considerably changed. Instead of pupils being arranged according as they were learning to write on the ground with stick, on the palm-leaf, on the plantain-leaf or on paper, each was now taught separately by the school-master in a distinct

45. *Ibid.*

46. N. L. Basak, 'Origin and Role of the Calcutta School Book Society in Promoting the Cause of Education in India, Especially Vernacular Education in Bengal (1817-1835)', *Bengal Past and Present*, vol. 78, No. 145 (Jan.-June 1959), p. 36.

47. *Ibid.*, p. 173.

48. J. C. Bagal, 'Primary Education in Calcutta (1818-1835)', *Bengal Past and Present*, vol. 81, No. 152 (July-December 1962), p. 85.

lesson. Boys were now arranged in classes, formed with reference to similarity of ability or proficiency, and a system of superintendence began under which Pundits visited different schools and explained to teachers any parts of the lesson they could not fully comprehend. Further, the system of holding annual, half-yearly, or quarterly examinations was instituted for the first time. These examinations were conducted both in public and private, and were often held in the presence of respectable European and Native gentlemen when gratuities were awarded to deserving teachers, prize-books to the best scholars, as well as books bestowed for the general use of the schools.⁴⁹

The Calcutta School Society, therefore, attempted to introduce several important changes: it tried to substitute printed books for manuscript school books; it widened the curriculum to include new subjects like Geography; the mode of instruction was changed and pupils arranged into classes; and the system of holding examinations on a regular basis was instituted. Besides, the School Society's activities combined an element of teacher-training as well, as can be seen from the fact that pundits were deputed to instruct teachers in lessons they could not comprehend. The promotional activities of the School Society, however, were limited mainly to Calcutta and did not generally affect *patshalas* in the countryside.⁵⁰ And, even in Calcutta, many *patshalas* continued to operate without having any connections with the School Society.⁵¹

In contrast to the Calcutta School Society, the impact of the work of the Calcutta School Book Society was much more wide-

49. Improvement induced by the Calcutta School Society is based on information given in Adam, pp. 9-10.

50. Following the lines of the Calcutta School Society, two other Societies, the Dacca School Society (Nov. 11, 1818) and Murshidabad Native School Society (June 16, 1819) subsequently came into being. Both these societies played a useful role by distributing publications of the School Book Society. See Basak, p. 203.

51. Adam estimated that in 1821, out of 211 *patshalas* in Calcutta, 115 submitted to the rules of the School Society, and 96 continued entirely unconnected with that Society. Adam, p. 9.

spread. Books printed by the Book Society were not restricted to Calcutta only but were distributed all over Bengal and India. The School Book Society generally concentrated on the production of elementary School books⁵² and Adam noted that out of 67 *patshalas* in Murshidabad, one teacher was using *Nitikatha*, a book on Moral Instructions, printed by the Book Society.⁵³ Thus, although the publications of the Book Society were in circulation all over Bengal, it practically had no effect on the *patshalas* as printed books were not in use in these institutes. The publications of the Book Society were rather in demand in the non-indigenous schools run by missionaries and other agencies.

Although the first and second groups (British officials and wealthy Bengalis) were involved in the Calcutta Book and School Society, their concern was less with the improvement of indigenous education and more with the introduction of western education through the English language. They set up several schools in Calcutta where English was taught and which catered mainly to the educational needs of the middle and upper classes.

The third group, the missionaries, however, operated not only in Calcutta but also in the outlying districts and in their own way attempted to promote education amongst the general mass of the people. The missionaries viewed education as a means to proselytisation and believed that the education they gave to the children, even if it contained little or no direct teaching, would dispose them to give a favourable hearing to Christian preaching subsequently.⁵⁴ Different missionaries started schools in different parts of Bengal. Apart from Calcutta, three other centres developed as important seats of missionary educational activity. The Serampore Mission operated mainly in and around Serampore. The London Missionary Society started a group of elementary schools under Robert May in and around Chinsurah. And, Burdwan became the most important centre of the Church Missionary Society's educational activities.

52. Basak, p. 162.

53. Adam, p. 233.

54. Laird, p. 84.

The Serampore missionaries were the only ones who undertook themselves to produce a comprehensive series of textbooks for use in the schools; the rest preferred to rely on the Calcutta School Book Society, for which the Serampore efforts provided an example.⁵⁵ As can be seen, missionary activities were concentrated mainly in Western Bengal, and Eastern and Northern Bengal were relatively little touched by their educational reforms.⁵⁶

Initially, the Serampore Baptists decided on a great extension of schools but by 1818, the emphasis was changed from the foundation of new schools to the reform of the existing indigenous schools, through the introduction of textbooks and periodic inspection.⁵⁷ Thus, instead of introducing a wholly westernized system using a European language as the teaching medium, it was decided to reform the indigenous schools on western lines but adapted to local Indian traditions.⁵⁸

The missionaries adopted the monitorial system of Lancaster and Bell⁵⁹ to Bengali conditions in such a way as to improve the 3 'R's.⁶⁰ Marshman devised a series of 'tables', containing the Bengali alphabet, words, paradigms of verbs, nouns and pronouns,

55. *Report of the Provincial Committee of the Calcutta School Book Society*, Calcutta, 1817, p. 4, cited in Laird, p. 79.

56. The Baptists, for example, had by 1818 established 92 Schools in and around Serampore, 11 at Katwa, 3 near Murshidabad, all in West Bengal; and only 5 schools at Dhaka in Eastern Bengal. See, E. Daniel Potts, *British Baptist Missionaries in India, 1793-1837*, Cambridge University Press, Great Britain, 1967, p. 119.

57. Laird, p. 70.

58. Potts, pp. 114-115.

59. The monitorial system was developed during the 1790's by Joseph Lancaster and Andrew Bell. The system had originated in Madras and was similar to the *Sardar Podo* system. It involved the use of senior boys, known as monitors, to teach what they had learnt to their juniors. Monitors were a regular feature of the missionary schools and they assumed a greater responsibility than the *Sardar Podos* had under the *gurus*. This was natural as the missionary schools had a much higher pupil enrolment than *patshalas* and hence the teacher needed greater assistance in class management.

60. Laird, p. 72.

sentences, numbers and arithmetical examples, which were printed at the Serampore press and posted up in the school rooms so that all the pupils could use them as examples for writing and reading under the guidance of the monitors.⁶¹ The text books were each divided into sections so as to provide a graduated course ; such textbooks included *Aesop's Fables* and *Historical Anecdotes*, as reading lessons "illustrative of justice, fidelity, probity and humanity" ; Arithmetic including the "zamindari papers"—local method of accountancy, land conveyancing, etc. ; a summary of the names and writings of Sanskrit authors ; *Dig Durshan*—"a miscellaneous collection of Truths and Facts" covering history, science and ethics ; a View of the Solar System, with a glossary of technical terms ; an *Epitome of Geography*, including a map ; and History and Chronology".⁶² The missionaries always insisted on a thorough preliminary grounding in the mother-tongue as the basis of their scheme of education and Marshman declared flatly "the hope of imparting efficient instruction to [the people]...in a language not their own is completely fallacious."⁶³

The missionaries, therefore, attempted several important changes. Their teaching was mainly based on the use of the printed book. The curriculum followed in mission schools was also much wider than that of the *patshalas* and included new subjects like Science, History, and Geography. Some missionary groups also attempted to provide teacher training and established a Normal School where villages sent teachers for a short course of training before eventually returning to their schools. But the efforts at teacher-training ended in failure.⁶⁴

61. J. Marshman, *Hints Relative to Native Schools*, Serampore, 1816 ; *1st Serampore Schools Report*, p. 20, both cited in Laird, p. 72.

62. *1st Serampore Schools Report*, pp. 20-29, cited in Laird, pp. 72-73.

63. A. Mukherjee, 'Missionaries and the New Education in Bengal (1757-1823)', *Calcutta Review*, October 1864, p. 60.

64. Marshman set up a Normal School at Serampore and May attempted to train teachers in Chinsurah. The scheme failed as it was found that many of the teachers who came for training were interested only in learning English and in the working of the missionary school system.

See, M. A. Laird, *Missionaries and Education in Bengal, 1793-1837*, Oxford University Press, Britain, 1972, pp. 111, 113.

Overall, by compiling and publishing a series of basic textbooks in various subjects, the missionaries attempted to provide a better quality of vernacular instruction than what was available in the traditional *patshalas*.⁶⁵

The attempts of the missionaries to widen the curriculum was not appreciated by all. While some pupils enjoyed the stories and fables, most were disinterested to learn Geography or Astronomy preferring to learn only what was necessary in obtaining a livelihood.⁶⁶ The old *patshala gurus* were positively hostile to mission schools and sometimes even used force to keep pupils from joining mission schools.⁶⁷ The *guru* was sceptical of western learning and suspicious of Christian based moral instruction, which threatened his livelihood and undermined his authority. Naturally, he opposed the rival establishment of schools and poisoned the people's minds against sending pupils to mission schools. The active co-operation of the people proved elusive to the missionaries and they often operated in an unwelcome atmosphere.⁶⁸ Instead of charging fees from pupils, as was the case in the *patshala*, missionaries often had to pay something to the scholars to induce them to come to their schools.⁶⁹ As such, the mission schools generally attracted the poorest section of the population, the relatively well-to-do preferring to attend the *patshalas* as before.⁷⁰

As has been noted earlier, the educational activities of the missionaries were not widespread but were confined largely to four centres : Calcutta, Serampore, Chinsurah and Burdwan. The limited nature of their work is further evident from the fact that in Burdwan, Adam reported that of 629 schools only 13 were missionary schools and in neighbouring Birbhum there was only one missionary school out of 412.⁷¹ Important though the missionary work was, its appli-

65. Basak, p. 84.

66. Laird, *Missionaries and Education in Bengal, 1793-1837*, pp. 82-85.

67. *Ibid.*, p. 110.

68. Potts, p. 117.

69. *Ibid.*

70. Laird, *Missionaries and Education in Bengal, 1793-1737*, p. 117.

71. Adam, pp. 239, 242.

cation was very limited, being confined mainly to a few centres of western Bengal and affected a very small section of the population. As the *Friend of India* noted in 1836, the educational activities of the missionaries amounted to little more 'beyond amusing ourselves with talking on the subject.'⁷²

During the early years of the nineteenth century, the Bengal Government adopted a policy of no interest in the *patshalas*. Even after the Act of 1813 and until 1835, the concern was whether to support the Indian traditional oriental classical education or to introduce Western learning. The traditional vernacular *patshala* education did not form a subject of consideration at all as it was believed that the vernacular was not sufficiently developed to be adopted as a vehicle for disseminating new ideas. The only effort made by the Government in the direction of the vernaculars was the appointment of Adam to conduct a survey of education in Bengal. It was hoped that Adam's Report would lead to measures for the extension and improvement of vernacular education.⁷³

In his final report, Adam pleaded that the indigenous schools of Bengal should be used as the base in any scheme of national education.⁷⁴ He condemned the view that education should start at the top and then filter downwards to the masses. Adam proposed to transform the existing indigenous schools into "fit vehicles of national education" by means of appropriate "improvements", and suggested four basic reforms for the purpose :

- (i) the preparation and publication of a series of school books on different subjects ;
- (ii) introduction of these books in the indigenous schools ;
- (iii) holding of periodical examinations of the teachers and scholars to test their knowledge in the content of these books ; and

72. *Friend of India*, 19 May, 1836, cited in Potts, p. 136.

73. Adam, p. xvii.

74. Indigenous schools include not only *patshalas* but also *tols*, *maktabs* and *madrassas*.

- (iv) distribution of rewards on the results thereof to provide the necessary incentive.⁷⁵

However, Adam's proposal was shelved by the then Bengal government as being impractical on account of the complicated nature of the details of his plan as well as the expenses involved.⁷⁶ Instead, the government adopted the 'filtration theory', which believed that education should first be concentrated on the 'upper' classes from whom it would naturally filter downwards.⁷⁷

In compliance with the 'downward filtration theory', the government of Bengal now began to direct its efforts towards improving the education of the higher and middle classes in the chief towns or *Sudder Stations* of its different districts. Bentinck's resolution of 7 March, 1835 had decreed the formal adoption of English education as the prime object of government encouragement⁷⁸ and following the resolution, zilla schools were opened in different district headquarters for the teaching of English literature and science through the medium of English.⁷⁹

The movement for English education was further strengthened by the resolution of Lord Hardinge in 1844 which declared that in the selection of candidates for public employment preference would generally be given to those educated in the institutions thus established.⁸⁰ At the same time, in 1844, Lord Hardinge also sanctioned the formation of village schools in the several districts of Bengal to provide useful elementary instruction in the vernacular language. These schools numbering 101 were set up in seven divisions of the Bengal Presidency, i. e., Murshidabad, Dacca,

75. Adam, pp. 375-385

76. *Report of General Committee of Public Instruction*, 1838-39, Calcutta, 1840, cited in Basak, p. 286.

77. J. A. Richey, ed., *Selections From Educational Records*, part II, 1840-59, Government of India Press, New Delhi, 1965, p. 65.

78. Sharp, pp. 130-131.

79. A. Basu, 'Hundred Years of Western Education in India', *Calcutta Review*, vol. 57, 1935, p. 19.

80. Refers to institutes for English education. Richey, pp. 90-91.

Jessore, Chittagong, Cuttack, Patna and Bhagulpore. The task of superintending these schools was entrusted to the Board of Revenue and its subordinate officers, the Divisional Commissioners and the District Collectors.

The general curriculum of the Hardinge schools consisted of vernacular reading, writing, arithmetic, geography and history of India and Bengal. At the lowest stage, children were to read and write the alphabet, the compound letters and numerals which were to be written on boards in large characters and hung up against the walls of school rooms. Next, they were to be taught correct sounds of letters, to write correctly from dictation and then be introduced to books. At the end of each 'oral lesson', the pupils would copy several words from the book many times over and care would be taken to prevent pupils from memorising lessons without spelling words. At the senior stage, pupils would be taught composition, letter writing, history, geography, exercises in arithmetic, parsing and spelling.⁸¹

In the Hardinge schools, the emphasis was clearly on the acquisition of learning through reading and writing the mother-tongue correctly as against the *patshala* system which was more oriented towards the acquisition of practical skills. The Hardinge schools were also based on the use of printed books, and involved a different method of teaching than in the *patshalas*. Classrooms, blackboards, and attendance registers were essential features of the Hardinge schools but were relatively unknown in the *patshalas*.

The Hardinge schools were not successful for a variety of reasons. Unhealthy location, poor superintendence, competition from the free Missionary schools, and popular attachment to the cheap traditional *patshalas* were some of the factors that contributed to the failure of the Government Vernacular Schools.⁸²

Down to 1854 the policy of promoting the education of the 'upper' classes continued. Even the Hardinge schools, despite

81. The discussion on Harding schools is based on information given in Richey, pp. 80-88 and Basak, pp. 385-411.

82. Basak, p. 410.

being set up in the villages to promote vernacular education, were in reality intended mainly for the 'upper' and 'middle' classes and this is borne out from the following remarks of the Under Secretary to the government of Bengal :

"It is the desire of the Governor that all boys who may come for instruction to these schools [Hardinge Schools] should be compelled to pay a monthly sum, however small for their tuition, and also be charged the full value of books supplied to them from the public stores. Gratuitous education is never appreciated, and moreover, the necessity for payment tends to induce more respected classes to send their children to the government schools which would otherwise be attended by those of the lowest orders. All are equally in want of instruction, and it is obviously proper to begin with those who can not only contribute means for its further extension, but influence others by their example to follow the same course."⁸³

Apparently, it was not the intention of Lord Hardinge to provide for the masses through his vernacular schools. Rather he wanted these schools to be set up as models for the emulation of the large number of *patshalas* spread over the entire countryside.

The surveys of Buchanan and Adam demonstrate clearly that there existed in Bengal about the beginning of the nineteenth century, an extensive system of village schools providing a practical type of elementary education geared to the demands of rural life. Adam's detailed reports give a fairly reliable picture of the nature and working of the *patshalas*, the methods of instructions used and the curriculum followed.

The *patshala*, as we have seen, was really a special kind of institute imparting basically secular instruction to all members of the village community, and could hardly be called 'school' as the modern usage of the term implies. The *patshala* was oriented more towards transmission of practical skills than to an encourage-

83 Richey, pp. 82-86.

ment of learning. Unlike 'modern' schools, the *patshala* atmosphere was informal and not subjected to lengthy rules and regulations. Every pupil received individual attention depending on his proficiency and a strong personal bond characterized the relationship between the teacher and pupil. The *guru* held absolute control over the *Patshala* and conducted classes as he pleased. Being set up generally through the co-operation of the people, the *patshalas* were popular institutes welcomed by all sections of the community irrespective of their religion, caste, or social status.

For centuries *patshalas* operated in their own way, catering to local needs and teaching traditional subjects in the traditional way, uninfluenced by any external factors whatsoever. But this situation changed in the early years of the nineteenth century. The coming of the British, and with them the missionaries, introduced a new element in Bengali society. The British brought with them new concepts of schooling which differed radically from that of the *patshalas*. In their eyes, the native system of schooling, as exemplified by the *patshalas*, was crude, defective, and unsatisfactory. Hence they attempted to reform these institutes to conform to their own pattern and ideas of schooling.

These endeavours at reform did not come officially from the Bengal Government but were the outcome of missionary activities and efforts of private societies and individuals. For the first time, new elements were introduced in the *Patshalas* and an alternative model of learning (schooling) presented to the people. But the impact of these reforms was very limited and even the schools set up by the missionaries were very few in number and confined to particular localities. Also, as we have seen, the local population, led by the *guru*, often took a positively hostile attitude to the new learning opposing its introduction and urging all to stick to their old traditional *patshala*. Except for small numbers in particular areas, *patshalas* in the first half of the nineteenth century, continued to function in their own natural way, largely unaffected by the ideas of the British officials and missionaries. Even then, the work of the reformers, particularly the missionaries, should not be under-

estimated. They were the first to penetrate the working of the traditional *patshala*, first to introduce a different kind of schooling in Bengal, and hence made a beginning for eventual reforms in this direction.

Throughout the first half of the nineteenth century, the Bengal government did not show much concern for the education of the lower classes and hence made no attempt to make use of the numerous *patshalas*. With the exception of the Hardinge experiment of 101 vernacular schools, very little had been done to provide the means of improved elementary education for the masses in Bengal.⁸⁴ In fact, the government showed a total lack of interest in the *patshalas* and adopted a policy of non-interference in the working of the *patshalas*. The Charter Act of 1813 had made the East India Company for the first time responsible for the education of the Indian people but even until 1835 no clear education system evolved. After 1835, the attention of the government was focussed on catering to 'upper' and 'middle' class education, while the 'lower' classes were left to fend for themselves. This policy continued down to 1854 and no significant move was made in the period to promote the cause of elementary education.

84. Basak, p. 424.

CHAPTER III

IMPROVING THE PATSHALAS:

1854—71

Until 1854, as we have seen, the Bengal government's policy towards the *patshalas* was one of non-interference and accordingly it did not get involved with the working of the *patshalas*. At that stage, its concern was only with education at the higher levels. The situation, however, changed with the promulgation of the Education Despatch of 1854 which urged that increased attention be given to vernacular schools for elementary education, including the indigenous schools already existing throughout the country. The Bengal government could now no longer ignore the *patshalas* and accordingly stepped forward to extend its control over these institutes. In attempting to extend its control, the government undertook several measures, all aimed at improvement, regulation, systematisation, and supervision, which eventually had a profound effect on the working of the traditional *patshala*.

The upgrading of the *patshalas*, resulting from the reforming measures, was the natural effect of the Education Department's strategy of controlling the *patshalas*. The reforming measures undertaken were directed mainly at the *guru*. The *guru* held the key to the *patshala* and constituted the principal element in any attempt to upgrade the *patshala*. Accordingly, most of the measures undertaken were based on improving the *guru*, on providing training to him, on enlarging the *patshala* curriculum, and on directing the *guru* as to how best to run a *patshala* properly and efficiently. The attempts to upgrade the *patshalas* led eventually to a clash of opinion regarding the character of the *patshalas*, a clash which centred on

the question, whether they were to be used as exclusively mass institutions or not ?

This chapter will present a detailed study of the various reforming measures, undertaken between 1854 and 1871, to bring the *patshalas* under the control of the Education Department. The controversy over whether *patshalas* were to be seen as for masses only will also be examined in depth. The chapter is divided into two phases : the first, from 1855 to 1862, will discuss the experiments at reform undertaken by Woodrow and Grant ; the second, from 1862 to 1871 will be devoted to analysing Bhudev Mukherjee's 'improved *patshala*' scheme.

Despatch of 1854 and Elementary Education

The renewal of the Company's Charter in 1853 gave rise to the questions of evolving a detailed educational policy for India. Accordingly, an enquiry was held into educational developments in India by the Select Committee of the House of Commons. The result of this inquiry was the celebrated Educational Despatch of 19 July 1854. Known popularly as Wood's Education Despatch (after Charles Wood who was then the President of the Board of Control), this document constituted an important landmark in Indian educational history and formed the basis for subsequent educational development down to the end of the century.

The Despatch of 1854 declared that the object of the educational system was the spread of European knowledge and science. This objective was to be achieved through the medium of the English language in the higher branches of institution and through vernacular language for the general mass of the people. The Despatch proposed the setting up of a new department of education in every province. This department was to be headed by the Director of Public Instruction who, assisted by an appropriate number of Inspecting Officers, would be responsible for the superintendence and general direction of all education matters. The Despatch proposed the establishment of universities at Calcutta and Bombay to provide the 'higher test and encouragement of liberal education'. At the

same time, it urged the setting up of a network of graded schools connecting the indigenous primary schools at the bottom with the University at the top through an intermediate chain of middle schools high schools, and colleges.

The Despatch acknowledged the impossibility of Government alone providing for all the educational needs of the country and urged that a system of grants-in-aid be adopted whereby aid would be given to all schools imparting a secular education, under adequate local management, agreeing to submit to government inspection, and charging a fee, however small, from scholars. The amount of aid to be given would be dictated by the requirements of each individual district and the availability of funds at the disposal of the government.

Being aware of the dearth of qualified school-teachers, the Despatch proposed the establishment of normal and model schools for 'the training of masters and the exemplification of the best methods for the organization, discipline and instruction of elementary schools.' The institution of scholarships was also proposed to enable the best pupils of inferior schools to be provided for in schools of a higher order. The Despatch urged the Government of Bengal to give greater attention for the encouragement of indigenous schools and education of the lower classes and came out strongly against the promoters of the 'downward filtration theory' declaring that instead of patronising the few, the education of the masses should, in future, be regarded as a duty of the State.¹

The Educational Despatch of 1854 attempted for the first time to set up a properly articulated system of education from the primary

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1. Provisions of the Despatch has been assimilated from 'Despatch of 1854' in J. A. Richey (ed.), *Selections From Educational Records*, Part II, 1840-1859, Calcutta, Superintendent Government Printing, 1922, pp. 364-393, hereafter, Richey.

For discussion of the Despatch, see,

R. J. Moore, *Sri Charles Wood's Indian Policy, 1853-66*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, pp. 108-123 and

Syed Nurullah and J. P. Naik, *A History of Education in India*, Macmillan and Co. Ltd., Bombay, pp. 96, 203-216.

school to the university and called for the adoption of active measures to extend mass education. The Despatch marked a clear change of government policy by encouraging the extension of education to the masses instead of confining it to the higher classes as before. The indigenous schools, which had been neglected for so long, were now thrust upon the attention of the government and assumed new importance.

In accordance with the directions of the Despatch, the Bengal government set up a separate Department of Education headed by a Director of Public Instruction in 1855 and established the Calcutta University in 1857. Also for the first time, it now turned to devise some measures for promoting elementary education. The existence in Bengal of a large number of *patshalas* scattered all over the countryside prompted the Bengal government to take up the idea of developing these institutes into a general system of popular instruction. The government was attracted to the *patshalas*, not only because they were widespread, but also because they were cheap and popular. The Education Department now began to consider ways in which to make the *patshalas* submit to their control and authority. All measures devised by the government in this period, attempted to improve the education given in the indigenous *patshalas* and no attempts were made to supersede the *patshala* system by creating a new, distinct, rival school system.

The Despatch of 1854 had decreed the extension of education to the masses and the Bengal government now chose the *patshalas* to achieve that end. It, therefore, stepped in to take over control of the *patshala*. The *patshalas* were already serving the masses but in a way that did not appeal to the government. The government was highly critical of the value of education imparted in the unregulated *Patshalas* and felt the need of introducing reforms aimed at improvement and standardization.

In this period, the Bengal government tried various measures in different parts of the presidency, all aimed at establishing authority over the *patshalas*. Of these measures, the most important were the 'circle' scheme and the 'improved *Patshala*' scheme. Both the e

schemes received strong support from the government and were tried over a considerable length of time in different districts. Both schemes were development of the same basic idea, i.e. extending control over *patshalas*. They were not really 'competing' schemes.

A. The First Phase (1855 to 1862) : The Schemes of Woodrow and Grant.

The system of 'circle' schools was stated in 1855 by Henry Woodrow, Inspector of Schools for East Bengal. Woodrow had previously served as Principal of La Martinière College (1848), became Secretary to the Council of Education (1854), before joining the newly formed Education Department as an Inspector of Schools in 1855. He, therefore, brought with him considerable experience in handling educational matters.

Under the 'circle' system, devised by Woodrow, three or four *patshalas* were taken to constitute a 'circle' to which a government pundit was attached on a fixed salary of Rs 15 per month. The pundit's duty was to visit the *patshalas* two days a week in rotation and induce the *patshala guru* to adopt an improved course of instruction. In places where there were no *patshalas*, villagers were promised a pundit if they opened *patshalas* taught by men nominated by the Deputy Inspector. It was also laid down that each circle of *paishalas* should have an attendance of about 120 pupils.² Taking three *patshalas* to a circle, this meant that the average number of students to each *patshala* should be forty. In the past, the *patshalas* had contained an average of 20 to 30 pupils, so the stipulation requiring 40 pupils to a *Patshala*, meant that the circle *patshalas* would be larger in size than the traditional *patshalas*. In fact, although the general requirement of 120 pupils to a circle was not always achieved, many circle *patshalas* did often record an enrolment of more than 40 pupils.³ Rewards were also now instituted to secure the co-operation of the *gurus* to the scheme. These rewards

2. RPIB, 1863-64, Appendix A, p. 114.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 115.

were to be given both to *gurus* and pupils on a half-yearly basis, in proportion to progress exhibited.*

The 'circle' system was not adopted all over Bengal and the operation of the scheme was limited mainly to the Central and South East Divisions.⁵ The scheme had started with an initial grant of Rs 18,000 per annum but by 1863-64 the grant for circle schools went up to Rs 27,000 per annum, of which Rs 18,000 was assigned to the South East Division, and Rs 9,000 to the Central Division.⁶ In about the same period, the number of circles organized went up from 37 in 1855-66 to 302 in 1864-65,⁷ indicating that some success had been achieved.

The object of the 'circle' scheme was the improvement of the *patshalas* by giving rewards to the *gurus* and their pupils. The scheme also contemplated the setting up of new *patshalas* in places where there were none and several such *patshalas* were indeed set up in the South East Division.⁸ What the scheme, however, could not foresee, was that considerable improvement could result in the conversion of these institutes into higher vernacular schools to be attended not by all sections of the community but mainly by the upper and middle classes. As it happened, sometimes out of the three schools in the

4. The *gurus* were generally paid between Rs 1 and Rs 2 monthly as rewards but no details are given of the rewards given to pupils, although it was mentioned that *gurus* often received grants equal to those earned by their pupils.

See, *Report of the Education Commission of 1882*, (hereafter *REC*, 1882), p. 96 and *RPIB*, 1863-64, Appendix A, p. 113.

5. The Central Division included Calcutta, 24-Pargana and Baraset, Nadia and Hooghly. The South-East Division included the districts of Dhaka, Faridpur, Barisal, Mymensingh, Pabna, Jessore, Comilla, Sylhet, Noakhali and Chittagong.

6. *Correspondence relative to the expediency of raising an educational cess in Bengali*, Simla, 1870, Appendix, p. vi.

7. *Report of the Bengal Provincial Committee*, Calcutta, 1982, p. 28, (hereafter *BPC*) and *Note on the state of Education in India*, Home Department, Government of India, p. 50.

8. *RPIB*, 1863-64, Appendix A, p. 115.

circle, one assumed a marked superiority over the other two. This often gave rise to a demand from the local inhabitants to replace the *guru* by a more qualified teacher. In such cases, the government pundit was then appointed to be their teacher on a salary not of Rs 15 but of Rs 10, the difference being made up to him by the fees of the scholars. The school thus became, in every respect, a vernacular school, maintained largely by the government.⁹ In this way, many of the circle schools gradually rose to be quite on a par with the best grant-in-aid vernacular schools of the region and, increasingly came to be attended more by pupils of the upper and middle classes than by children of the lower orders supposed to constitute the masses.¹⁰

It was also estimated that the 'circle' system when fully developed would be unduly expensive. The cost of each circle *patshala* after improvement was calculated at about Rs 180 a year and taking the number of *patshalas* in an average Bengal district to be 1000, the total expense for a district worked out to Rs 1, 80, 000 a year, an amount which the Bengal government was unwilling to absorb.¹¹

Thus, in the working of the 'circle' system, three difficulties emerged. First as the scheme developed, it became evident that the 'circle' schools were gradually converting into regular government schools and attracting upper class pupils rather than the masses. Second, the expenses involved in the full development of the scheme were calculated to be beyond the means of the Bengal government. And, thirdly, the level of progress achieved by the scheme was considered to be too slow and, it was felt, that much too long a time would be needed under the scheme to improve and control the vast network of existing indigenous schools.¹² As such, even while the 'circle' system was operating in full swing, the Bengal government was

9. C. E. Buckland, *Bengal under the Lt-Governors*, 2 Vols, Calcutta, 1902, vol. I. p. 215.

10. *RPIB*, 1863-64, Appendix A, p. 114.

11. *Education Proceedings No. 64*, October 1860, Also, Buckland, p. 216.

12. *REC*, 1882, p. 96.

fully alive to the need of devising an alternative system of securing a greater quantity of improved primary instruction by cheaper methods.

The operation of the measures prescribed by the Despatch of 1854 was the subject of review in 1859 in order to determine measures on a more extended scale for the promotion of education in India. The occasion for the review arose on account of the transfer of the governance of India from the Company to the Crown (1858). Lord Stanley's Despatch of 7th April 1859 on the subject of education declared that in framing a general scheme of vernacular education, 'the greatest possible use would have to be made of existing schools and of the masters to whom however inefficient as teachers, the people have been accustomed to look up with respect.'¹³ The Despatch further observed that the poorer section of the community were unable to provide the required support for the establishment of schools under the existing grant-in-aid system.¹⁴ Hence, the Despatch decreed that grants-in-aid were not to be applied for the extension of vernacular education to the masses of the population and suggested for consideration the levying of an education rate to provide funds for elementary education. This put greater pressure on the Bengal government to evolve a new cheap scheme for the education of the masses. What was required, from the Bengal government's point of view, was to develop a scheme based on the needs of the people, capable of easy extension and yet cheap in expenses.¹⁵

With the above object in view, the Lt-Governor, Sir J. P. Grant, proposed a new scheme of primary education on 19 October 1860. As with the 'circle' system, the new scheme was also based on the improvement of the indigenous schools. But, as we shall see later, the mode of operation was completely different.

Grant argued that all attempts to reach the masses would fail if the measures prescribed did not conform to the feelings of the people and he was against the idea of launching any scheme involving the abolition of existing village schools and school-masters. He was

13, 'Despatch of 1859' in Richey, p. 444.

14. Nurullah and Naik, p. 328.

15, *Education Proceedings*, No. 64, October, 1860.

well aware that most *gurus* were ignorant and poorly-qualified and that the general level of instruction imparted in the *patshalas* was very low. These drawbacks, however, did not appear to him to be permanent and unimproveable. Accordingly, his scheme embraced measures aimed at reforming the *patshalas* and *gurus* recognizing, thereby, the value of the instructions which the people had in the past sought and approved.¹⁶

Under Grant's scheme, the Education Department would be required to prepare a list showing existing village *patshala* in every district. From this list, the Inspector of Schools, aided by the Deputy Inspectors, would choose those schools considered to be most capable of improvement. The Inspectors would induce the *gurus* or the proprietors and supporters of the selected schools, to submit to periodic inspections. In order to contain the expenses of the scheme and to ensure that it did not extend beyond reasonable proportions, it was deemed that the erection and repairs of the school-house would be left to the inhabitants and that as before teachers would continue to be chiefly remunerated by the fees of the pupils. Books would also be supplied to the *patshalas* at a very low price. These books would cover subjects familiar to the people like arithmetic, agricultural and commercial accounts, forms of agreements and even models of complimentary and formal letters. No attempts would be made to impart English instruction. The improved instruction to be given was to be limited to the measurement of land ; to some short Bengali Grammar of the simplest kind ; and to an introduction of the study of the first elements of Geography and Indian History.¹⁷

In order to secure the co-operation of the *guru* and to stimulate him to greater exertion, a payment of reward in cash would be given as an inducement. The cash reward would be given on the Inspector being satisfied that the *patshala* had been well attended by scholars who had passed a fair examination in the subjects to which the education of the masses was to be limited. The amount to be given as

16. *Ibid.*

17. This para is based on information given in *Education Proceedings*, No. 64, October 1860.

rewards would not exceed half of the fees which the *guru* generally received from his scholars, about Rs 30 to Rs 36 a year taking the average of a teacher's earnings at Rs. 5 a month. In addition, an amount of Rs 20 per annum was to be spent on each *patshala* for the purchase of books and giving of prizes and money rewards to pupils.¹⁸

The scheme also contemplated the establishment by government of some vernacular schools as models to the indigenous schools. It was estimated that six model schools would be sufficient to meet the needs of one district. The curriculum to be followed in the model schools were to be similar to those taught in the *patshalas*, the only difference being that the model school houses would be better built, teachers better paid, and books and writing material would be used here from the very beginning instead of dictation and writing on the ground.¹⁹

As can be seen, the model schools instituted important changes and marked considerable elevation of standards. The government model schools and the old *patshalas* can now be seen as two distinct models. Despite the government's concern and appreciation of the value of the *patshalas*, it was in reality extremely critical of the old form of education, and this is borne out from the attitude implied in making books and writing materials compulsory. The government model schools reflected the ultimate aim of the scheme, being the ideal and setting the standard to which all other *patshalas* must endeavour to reach.

These model schools were to be distributed, not at the sudder stations where the demand would be strong for English education, but in the thickly populated rural villages. The expenses for the scheme for one district was calculated as follows :

	Year	Rs
100 indigenous schools, each at Rs 50 a year		5,000
6 model schools, each at Rs 360 a year		2,160
4 Sub-Inspectors, each at Rs 1200 a year		4,800
		<hr/> 11,960 <hr/>

18. *Ibid.*

19. *Ibid.*

It was proposed that, owing to the limited nature of available funds, the scheme be tried initially only in selected districts, and should the plan succeed it would then be extended to other areas if more funding became available. Regarding the choice of districts for the experiment, it was urged that the scheme be started, not in the vicinity of Calcutta, but in more distant districts having less contact with urban centres.²⁰

As can be seen, the basis of Grant's scheme was the improvement of the *patshalas* by the offer of money rewards to the *gurus*. The aim was clearly improvement and rewards were to be used as merely means for achieving that end. The improvement was to be brought about mainly by improving the *gurus*. However, the scheme made no provision for the education of the *gurus*. In the absence of any formal provision for training, the mere offer of money rewards was unlikely to lead to the adoption of the desired improvements.²¹ The fact that the use of books was to be encouraged and reading of grammar, geography, and history started meant considerable elevation of the course of studies as compared to that of the old *patshalas*. It was certainly not going to be easy for the *guru* to teach subjects in which he himself had never been given any instruction. Without proper training, the *guru* would be unable to carry out changes in the direction of the government model. Consequently, modifications became necessary as the scheme was gradually put into operation.

The trial of Grant's scheme was initially carried out in the Burdwan district with 39 schools under the supervision of Inspector Woodrow, originator of the 'circle' system. As proposed by Grant, Woodrow decided on giving cash grants to *gurus* as inducement for introducing printed books and improved course of instruction, the total sum allowable in a year for one school being Rs 30. At the same time, Woodrow instituted a scale of rewards to be followed in the administering of the grants to the *gurus*. The earnings of the *guru* were made dependent on the level of progress achieved by his

20. *Ibid.*

21. *RPIB*, 1862-63, Appendix A, p. 208.

pupils. No *guru* would be paid any money if his pupils were unable to spell and write at dictation words of three letters, and say the multiplication table up to ten times ten. One pice monthly would be paid for every boy able to read and explain the meaning of words and sentences in a simple book, and able to do sums in simple Addition, Subtraction and Multiplication. One anna monthly would be given for every boy who could read and explain passages from a higher book, who could successfully work easy sums in Mental Arithmetic, and could also work out, on his slate or on plantain leaves, simple sums in Compound Addition, Subtraction and Multiplication. Two annas monthly would be given for every boy able to read and write without gross blunders, and who could work sums in the Rule of Three, copy a map neatly, knew the proper Forms of address, and had made some progress in the knowledge of *zamindari* and *mahajani* accounts. And, finally, four annas monthly was to be given to every pupil successfully completing the highest course prescribed for indigenous schools, e. g., a knowledge of Bengali Grammar, Geography and History in addition to a full grasp of Arithmetic, *Zamindari/Mahajani* accounts, Forms of Agreement, Mensuration and different types of Letter-writing.²²

Woodrow felt that to carry out the scheme successfully, it was essential to make some provision for the teaching of the *gurus* as this would make the *gurus* better able to fulfil their duties properly. Accordingly, Woodrow selected eleven *gurus* and prevailed on them to study a year at the Normal School,²³ with stipends of Rs 5 a month each, and placed Normal School students to officiate for them on salaries of Rs 12 a month each, together with such other fees as they might be able to raise.²⁴ Although initially the expenditure would be Rs 17 a month for each school, the costs would come down considerably after the *gurus* returned from the Normal School.

22. Details of the scale of rewards has been taken from, *Education Proceedings*, No. 64, July 1862.

23. Some Normal Schools had earlier been established in Bengal to turn out teachers for the better vernacular schools.

24. *Education Proceedings*, No. 64, July 1862.

to their *patshala*. Once re-installed, they would again receive payment according to results.

As can be seen, Woodrow's handling of the scheme, although based on the principles laid down by Grant, contained two important modifications. Firstly, he made no attempt to set up any Model District School, an important feature of the original Grant scheme. Instead, he floated the idea of providing for the actual teaching of *gurus* by their temporary transfer to a Normal School. This step he considered to be of crucial importance if any real improvement was to be induced in the *patshalas*. Secondly, Woodrow transformed the original idea of cash rewards to the *gurus* into virtually a system of payment by results to be determined by the progress of the pupils examined.

Following the recommendation of the Director of Public Instruction, the Government of Bengal in July 1862 approved the above modifications introduced in Grant's scheme. It was now declared that instead of the six model schools originally proposed for each district, one normal training school would be set up and an assignment of Rs 30,000 earlier included in the budget was considered sufficient for the immediate introduction of the scheme in the districts of Burdwan, Dacca, and Nadia. It was also now added that the *guru*, after completion of his training in the Normal School and on his return to the *patshala*, would receive, on examination and approval by the Inspector, a certificate carrying with it a stipend of 1 rupee per mensem to continue in force for 2 years, and to be renewable periodically on proof of continued efficiency.²⁵

That the scheme was a tentative one is clearly evident from the fact that within three to four months of the implementation of Woodrow's modifications, the Director of Public Instructions had asked for a special report on the working of the scheme from the Inspector of Schools, Central Division.²⁶ The implementation of the

25. *Education Proceedings*, No. 65, July 1862.

26. Woodrow had written to the Director of Public Instructions on 30 April 1862 describing his modifications of Grant's scheme. The Director wrote to Medlicott, Inspector of Schools, Central Division, on 9 August

modified Grant scheme had brought unexpected developments. Both Inspector J. G. Medlicott and Assistant Inspector Bhudev Mukherjee, reporting on the working of the scheme in Burdwan and Krishnagar respectively, voiced the opinion that under the management of the Normal School pupils, the *patshalas* were being gradually elevated into schools of a higher order welcomed by the better class of people rather than the masses.

It was observed that several changes had been induced in the internal economy of the *patshalas* by the Normal School pupils. The *patshala* hours were changed from two sessions (6 to 9 a. m., 3 to 6 p. m.) to one continuous session (10 a. m. to 4 p. m.). One of the main reasons of the attraction of the *patshalas* to the masses was their flexibility of school hours which allowed children to run errands and do household chores in between classes. The new school hours stopped this practice, hitting hard the children of the lower classes. The old cheap system of teaching to write with the chalk on palm, then plantain leaves, and lastly on paper, was now replaced by the use of slates and paper from the very beginning. The use of printed books (rarely used before in the *patshalas*) was now introduced from the beginning and displaced the former practice of learning to read and write simultaneously. The Normal School pupils also gave decided preference to teaching arithmetic on the English method, and exercises in Mental Arithmetic and the Native system of accounts, traditionally the strong points of *patshala* education, were now neglected and nearly discontinued. Further, money payments were exclusively levied for schooling fees previously paid partly in 'cash' and partly in 'kind'.²⁷

The outcome of the changes induced by the Normal School pupils was that the number of pupils in all *patshalas* under improvement fell off, most of those leaving being invariably the

1862 requesting special report on the working of Woodrow's modifications of Grant's scheme.

See, *Education Proceedings*, No. 52, January 1863.

27. Changes induced by Normal School pupils are based on information given in, *Education Proceedings* No. 51, January 1863.

children of the poorer classes. The improvements effected were clearly revolutionary in so far as the old *patshalas* were concerned and the resultant impact was quite the contrary of what the authors of the scheme had envisaged. The improvements practically took away from the *patshalas* those very characteristics which made it popular to the masses. Consequently, the children of the lower classes deserted the improved *patshalas*. Those dropping out from the *patshalas* could have gone on to attend other unaided *patshalas* in the locality (if there were any) or be deprived of any instruction whatsoever. As Inspector Medlicott observed :

“when one passes from a *patshala* in its original condition, to one under a Normal School pupil, it is striking to observe the marked difference in the appearance of the pupils in each ; in the former I found the naked children of the cultivators, and boys of the lowest class that has ever been reached by instructions of any kind with a rare specimen of the better class of villagers ; in the latter I found (as a rule) only the Brahmin and writer caste boys. To my enquiries, made from everyone I met, there was but one answer, namely that the lower class boys had retired altogether from the *patshalas*.”²⁸

It was also discovered by both Medlicott and Bhudev that many of the teachers undergoing training at the Normal School were new appointees as *patshala gurus*. This meant that only a fraction of the old traditional *gurus* (who had been involved in *patshala* teaching prior to the scheme) had submitted to Normal School training. Table III. 1, on the following page, showing statistics obtained of Bhudev's district, Krishnagar, will illustrate the point.

It is evident from the table that of the ten *gurus* (of whom details are available) submitting to Normal School training, only three were found to be traditional *gurus*, one had been appointed *guru* only a fortnight back, and the remainder were newcomers to the profession, having been appointed *gurus* on the eve of joining the Normal

TABLE III. 1 : DETAILS OF *GURUS* UNDERGOING NORMAL SCHOOL
TRAINING IN KRISHNAGAR DISTRICT

Name of the <i>gurus</i> receiving instruction in the <i>guru</i> class	Age in years	Villages they come from	Traditional <i>gurus</i> or not	Relative of a <i>guru</i> or not	Nominee of village or not
W. C. Chakraborty	26	Baloor	No	Not a relative	Yes
Brojaraj Roy	18	Jamna	Yes	Son of a <i>guru</i>	"
J. C. Bannerjee	23	Bagnaparah	No	Son of a <i>guru</i>	"
J. Chakraborty	20	Beejor	No	Not a relative	"
J. Roy	21	Pallah	Yes	Son of a <i>guru</i>	"
Ramkisto Dutt	22	Garaghatta	<i>Guru</i> for a fort- night in this <i>patshala</i>	Brother of a <i>guru</i>	"
Issan Chunder Sircar	34	Doomoordah	Yes	Son of a <i>guru</i>	
B. M. Ghosh	21	Nobogram	No	Not a relative	"
P. C. Ghosh	30	Astai	No	Not a relative	"
Kedarnath Ghosh	No details available				"
Dwarkinath Mullick	25	Chachai	No	Brother of a <i>gnru</i>	"

Source : *Education Proceedings*, No. 51, January 1863.

School. In fact, four of the newly appointed *gurus* were not even related to any *guru* and had no previous connection to the teaching profession whatsoever. Clearly, a majority of the traditional *gurus* did not submit to the training scheme. This indicated that they were not attracted to the new school model involved in the training scheme. They were unwilling to submit to government control preferring to continue undisturbed their old teaching practices. The resistance and non-co-operation of the actual *gurus* to the scheme explains the fresh appointment of newcomers as *gurus*. Not having the strong link to the *patshala* as the old *gurus*, the newcomers were less averse to take up the Departmental model and submitted more easily to the Training scheme. This implied that a new class of *gurus* were being trained to become future teachers of *patshalas*. This was certainly an important development which the original scheme had not envisaged. The plan was to improve the *patshala gurus*, not replace them by a new cadre of teachers. The fact that the villagers nominated their future *gurus* for training at the Normal School was also important. It indicated that the Department realized the need to seek the co-operation of the villagers for the success of the scheme. Hence, the villagers were given the authority to select *gurus* for normal school training.²⁹

Another criticism against Grant's scheme was the difficulty of administering with justice the complicated system of rewards instituted by Woodrow. It was considered to be too elaborate to apply it properly to any one school and great difficulties were faced in classifying boys under it.³⁰ It was, as such, recommended by the Inspectors to replace the system of rewards by payment in fixed stipends.

29. However, it ought to be noted here, that the spokesmen of the villages i.e., those likely to have a say in the choice of nominating a *guru* were almost invariably from the middle and upper classes of the community. So, in actuality this meant that it was these higher classes who were supporting the training scheme for *gurus*.

30. *Education Proceedings*, No. 51, January 1863.

B. The Second Phase (1862 to 1871): Bhudev's Improved *Patshala* Scheme.

On account of the above drawbacks it again became necessary to introduce modifications for the further prosecution of the experiment. The Normal School system was now reshaped on the recommendations of Bhudev Mukherjee. Bhudev had joined the Education Department in 1862 as an Assistant Inspector. Prior to that, he had served as the Headmaster of the Howrah School (1849-56) and the Hooghly Normal School (1856-62). He was thus an important educational figure of the time and well-experienced in the sphere of teacher-training.

Bhudev proposed that villages where *patshalas* were already in existence or where it might be desired to set up *patshalas*, would be invited to send for a year's training in a Normal School either their present *guru*, or some other person (preferably the *guru's* relative) whom they would undertake to receive as their future school master. Their nominee, if accepted by the Inspector, would be sent to a Normal School with a stipend of Rs 5 per mensem. A model *patshala* would also be attached to the Normal School which the *gurus* under training would be required to attend in order to get a practical demonstration of the actual functioning of improved *patshalas*. No Normal School pupil would be sent to the *patshala* as before. But during the period of the *guru's* training, some other person would be appointed temporarily to run the *patshala* on condition that he would hand over charge to the *guru* on his return from the Normal School. To ensure still greater certainty to any future operations under the scheme, it was made binding for the villagers and their nominees to enter into two distinct written agreements.³¹ Table III. 2 illustrates the two different Forms of Agreement drawn for the purpose :

31. Details of the Normal School scheme have been taken from *BPC*, pp. 27-28 ; and *Educational Proceedings*, No. 51, January 1863.

TABLE III. 2

(a) Form of Agreement to be signed by villagers

We the undersigned inhabitants of the village of...thana...zilla... do hereby certify that we have nominated...aged...years son of... inhabitant of...village, as the future teacher of our village *patshala*; we also hereby agree to place the said...in charge of our village *patshala* on his return with a certificate of qualification from the Government Training School. In case of the non-fulfilment on our part of the above conditions, we hereby pledge ourselves severally and collectively to pay to Government all the expenses not exceeding Rs 60 which may have been incurred in the education and training of our nominee the said...Given this day the...of the year 186—. The signatures in this paper were made in our presence and at...in the village of...by bonafide inhabitants of the said village.

Educational officer,

Zemindary or Police officer, & c., & c.

Signatures of the villagers, & c., & c.

(b) Form of Agreement to be signed by the pupil, entering the Government Training School...for gurus.

We who sign our names, residences, & c., & c., in this book do, by that act of signature, give our consent each for himself to be admitted from the dates mentioned against our names into the Training school at...on a monthly stipend of Rs 5 payable in accordance with the Rules of the Institution. We further agree by the act of signature in this book, each for himself, to return, after receiving Certificates of qualification, to the Villages whence we have been selected, and there enter upon and duly discharge the duties of Village School Masters, on the understanding that a sum not less than our present monthly stipends will be continued to us in the shape of stipends or rewards as long as we shall continue to deserve them by discharging our duties in a satisfactory manner. We bind ourselves further, each for his own part by the act of our signature

in this book, to pay a fine of Rs 60 into the hands of the Inspector of Schools...Division on account of Government, in case we wilfully fail to perform any or all of the above conditions.

Source : *Report of Public Instruction in Bengal*, 1862-63, Appendix A, pp. 209-210.

The two forms of agreement illustrate the control that was now to be exercised by the government. The villagers were now bound to accept the government trained *guru* or pay the expenses for the training. But they would have no choice in determining what training was to be given to the *gurus*. In agreeing to accept the trained *guru*, the villagers were also agreeing to accept the changes that the government trained *guru* would be urged to introduce. The *gurus*, on their part, under their terms of contract, would have to submit to all rules set up by the Training Institute. Moreover, they would be bound to return to their nominated *patshala* and lose the freedom to opt out of the profession, or to set up or join some other *patshala* in a different village of their choice. Fine was imposed clearly to act as a deterrence to any breach of contract and to ensure total submission and control over *gurus*.

Three important changes were introduced in the modified scheme. First, it replaced the former complicated system of payment by results by that of payment by fixed stipends. Second, by providing for model *patshalas*, it gave *gurus* a chance to observe first hand what *patshalas* really ought to be as conceived by the Government. Third, it stressed greater security to future operations by introducing formal agreements.

The scheme was approved by the Government of Bengal and put under the independent charge of Bhudev Mukherjee. Initial work was commenced with three Training Schools set up in Burdwan, Nadia and Jessore. The main reason which had prompted the modifications was that under the old scheme, the *patshalas* were being converted into schools frequented no longer by children of the masses but rather by pupils of the better class. The object of the modified scheme, therefore, was to remedy the situation, to

improve the *patshalas* without disturbing the internal balance, i.e., ensure that the *patshala* education continued to be sufficiently practical and attractive to hold on to its lower class pupils. A careful scheme of reform was now drawn up which would retain popular characteristics of the *patshalas* and yet improve them as well.

The model *patshalas*, which were an important feature of the scheme, were to preserve as closely as possible the native *patshala* system. No benches or tables were to be used and classes were to be arranged in the palm-leaf, plantain-leaf and paper sections. The course of studies prescribed for the training schools was arranged to meet the general requirements of elementary village schools. The course retained the old popular *patshala* subjects but at the same time introduced several new elements as well. Thus, Arithmetic, *Mahajani* and *Zamindari* accounts, Reading from manuscript and Writing from dictation letters, petitions, leases and agreements were retained as part of the Normal School curriculum. In addition to the above, it was now prescribed that Reading from print, History of Bengal, Geography of Bengal and India, Object lessons and art of teaching, would also be taught.^{3 2}

An idea of the actual standard attained by the *gurus* can be formed by the type of questions they were required to answer at the training school examination. Table III. 3 presents a sample question paper for Normal School examinees.

TABLE III. 3 : QUESTION PAPER FOR
NORMAL SCHOOL EXAMINEES

A. History, Geography, and Accounts

1. Draw a map of the Nadia district, giving the names of the several thanahs into which the district is divided, and the courses of the several streams, and the Railway which goes through it.
 2. Name the principal rivers of India, and the parts of the country through which they flow.
-

3. Give all the proofs that the Earth is a round body.
4. Describe the administration of Warren Hastings ; Lord Cornwallis ; Lord William Bentinck.
5. Name and describe all the different papers used in *zamindari* accounts.
6. Prepare a shop-keeper's day-book, and show how you would ledger it.

B. Arithmetic and Surveying

1. Questions on the Subhankari rules.
2. If A and B can do a piece of work in 3 days, B and C in 5 days, A and C in 6 days, in how many days can all three together finish it ?
3. What will be the amount in 3 years of Rupees 250 lent out at compound interest at 5 percent per annum ?
4. Prove by figures the truth of the proposition, that the area of a triangle is equal to half the base multiplied by the height.
5. Show how to prepare a field book ; take an example and then explain how you will draw out a plan from it.

C. Teaching

1. The *patshala* opens and closes twice a day ; show how you will keep your registers of attendance.
2. The pupils of the *patshalas* have different lessons, while usually there is but one teacher. Say by what means all the pupils may be kept employed during all the *patshala* time, and also how you will arrange and seat the different classes.
3. What different punishments would you award for
 - (i) irregularity of attendance ; (ii) inattention to lessons ;
 - (iii) use of bad language ; (iv) non-payment of fees ?

Source : *Report of Public Instruction in Bengal, 1863-64*
Appendix A, pp. 342-43.

It is evident from the above set of questions that the course was divided into three clear sections and the *gurus* were now required to learn considerably more than what they knew before. The shift was clearly towards the European school model although subjects like native arithmetic and the native system of accounts continued to be taught. In the traditional *patshala*, the chief objective was the transmission of practical skills. The inclusion now of subjects like Geography, History, and general topics like details of the shape of the Earth suggests a desire to transmit knowledge and instil a desire for learning for its own sake. The tendency towards the European school model is further reinforced by the introduction of Geometry (not taught before) and the new importance given to the proper management of the *patshala*. The *patshalas* were now to be re-organized on Western concepts as implied by the need to maintain registers of attendance, arrangement of lessons, and fixation of seating for different classes. Irregularity of attendance and non-payment of fees were now to be considered as offences to be dealt with by punishments. Discipline had always been a key point of the *patshala*. But now, for the first time, specific punishments were to be awarded for specific offences. The *guru* could no longer do as he pleased. The absolute control which he had earlier commanded over the *patshalas* was clearly slipping away and he was slowly being transformed into a mere servant of the government.

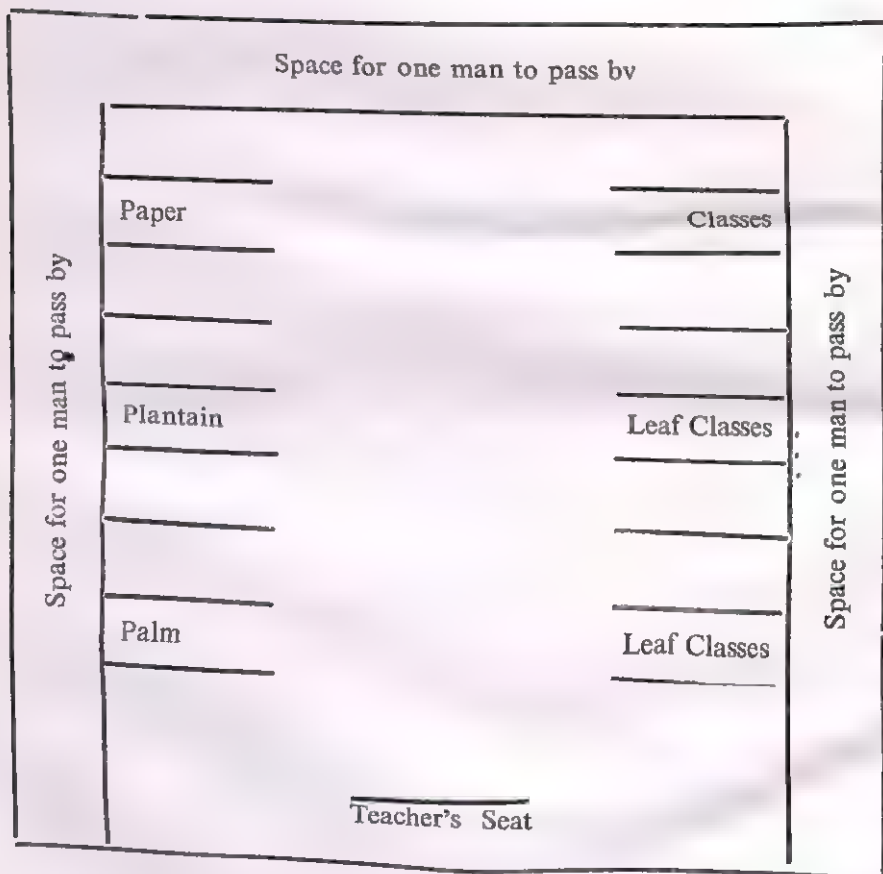
As was to be expected, the return of the trained *gurus* to the *Patshalas* soon resulted in various changes being made in the internal management of the *patshalas*. The *patshalas* were now re-organized on new lines. Those *patshalas*, which had proper school house and grounds, were kept neat and clean, and regularity and punctuality of attendance strictly enforced. Maps and blackboards were also being used by some of the trained *gurus*. However, school hours for the *patshala* continued to operate as before in two sessions, forenoon and afternoon, in deference to the old practices of the people and, schooling fees, too, were collected partly in 'cash' and partly in 'kind'.³³

33. *RPIB*, 1863-64, Appendix A, pp. 352-362.

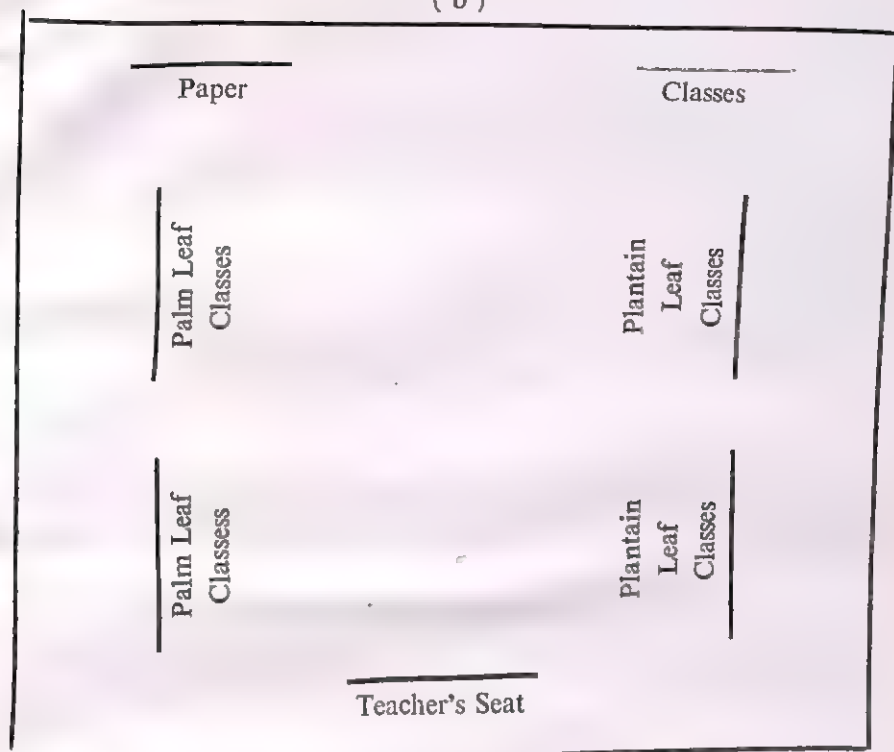
The seating arrangement of the classroom was now systematically placed to enable the *guru* to have the whole school under his vigilant eye as well as easy access to every pupil. The following table indicates how classes were rearranged :

TABLE III, 4 : SUGGESTIONS FROM BHUDEV
MUKHERJEE REGARDING POSSIBLE
ARRANGEMENT OF CLASSES

(a)



(b)



Source : *Report of Public Instruction in Bengal*, 1863-64, Appendix A, pp. 363-364.

Both proposals were aimed at providing the teacher with maximum access to all pupils. Further, children were now clearly grouped together into distinct classes depending on their attainments. In the past, too, *patshala* pupils had been divided into different groups based on progress, but their seating arrangements had never been systematised to the extent proposed. Classes had previously been arranged according to the ideas and needs of each individual *guru*. But this situation was now altered and *gurus* were asked to reorganize their seating arrangement in accordance to set plans offered by the Education Department.

Patshala classes still continued to be divided as before into palm-leaf, plantain-leaf, and paper and the monitorial system continued.

But the lessons of the several classes were now so arranged as to enable the master to take cognizance of every lesson at school, leave time for the monitors to receive fresh lessons every day, and ensure that all pupils were kept busy during school hours.³⁴ The course of studies was limited in the first year mainly to reading, writing, and arithmetic. Gradually, as the class progressed, other subjects like geography and history were to be added and the use of books introduced cautiously. Table III. 5, on the next page, illustrates the details of the new arrangement of class lessons adopted in the improved *patshalas*.

The introduction of routine of studies was a completely new innovation for the *patshalas*. The *gurus* had in the past never adhered to a fixed routine nor were their lessons ever confined to specific time periods. Every pupil, depending on ability, had always received individual treatment from the *guru*. Fixed time period and class routine simply had not mattered in the free *patshala* atmosphere where there was no annual school calendar, no fixed examination dates, and where the pupil could get promoted any time of the year if the *guru* felt that he had achieved the necessary distinction. The above routine of studies was only a sample and modification could be made if necessary. But Bhudev stipulated that the Deputy Inspector would be responsible for drawing up routine of daily studies for use in the *patshalas* of his locality to be adopted by the *gurus*.³⁵ This effectively meant that the *gurus* would no longer be able to conduct classes as they pleased. They were now to do as told by the directives of the Education Department.

Finally, school discipline assumed a new angle in the improved *patshalas*. The seat of every pupil was now fixed until promoted to a higher section. No students were allowed to borrow from other leaves, chalk, inkpots, paper, slates, pencils or books without prior permission of the teacher. Registers of daily attendance, never used before in the *patshalas*, were now to be maintained. Table III. 6

34. *Ibid.*, p. 364.

35. *Ibid.*, pp. 365.

TABLE III. 5 : ROUTINE OF STUDIES LAID DOWN BY BHUDEV MUKHERJEE FOR POSSIBLE ADOPTION IN THE IMPROVED *PATSHALA*

FORENOON			AFTERNOON	
6 to 7 a. m.	7 to 8 a. m.	8 to 9 a. m.	3 to 4 p. m.	4 to 5 p. m.
Writing	Writing	Writing	Reading	Object Lessons and simultaneous reading of the Tables
Ditto	Ditto	Ditto	Ditto	Ditto
Reading	Arithmetic	Reading	Writing	Ditto
Arithmetic	Reading	Writing	Reading	Ditto

There ought to be manual exercises of the whole school every half hour for about 5 minutes, each pupil standing in his own proper place to do as the master dictates. The master ought himself to examine all the pupils of his school once every week to test the progress made by them in their lessons.

Source : *Report of Public Instruction in Bengal*, 1863-64, Appendix A, p. 365.

shows a sample of the kind of details required to be maintained by the new registers (see following page).

An examination of the Register of Attendance reveals some interesting points. All *patshala* pupils (and even their parents) were personally known to the *guru* who had never before felt the need to keep record of attendance figures. He was now, not only to keep track of total attendance and absentees, but also to distinguish between Hindu and Muslim pupils. He would also now have to disclose his income officially and maintain record of total holidays. Further, the *guru* himself would have to seek permission for absenting from the school. Clearly, his authority was being undermined as he submitted to government control. The Register of Attendance was apparently devised to collect statistics for the benefit of the Education Department. It had less to do with actual improvement of the *patshala* and more with 'standardization', and obedience to authority.

All the above reforms signified considerable changes in the internal management of the *patshalas*. Care was no doubt taken to preserve some of the traditional practices of the *patshala*. But the improvements induced such as, the new arrangement of classes, daily routine of studies and regular maintenance of attendance registers were completely new concepts as far as the *patshalas* were concerned. These measures were important features of regular schools and one can hardly fail to see that these improvements would inevitably result in the eventual conversion of the *patshalas* into regular schools on the Departmental model.

The masses, however, were not impressed by the novelty of the new measures and Bhudev's compromise scheme, consisting of a mixture of some modern ideas with some old *Patshala* practices, came to be appreciated more by children of the better classes. A variety of causes contributed to the failure of Bhudev's scheme. As has already been pointed out, the scheme involved changes of no relevance to the needs of lower class pupils. The shift towards the school model tended to lessen the utility of the *patshalas* for those who wanted only the skills that could be derived from the traditional model; hence the lower class pupils began to keep away from the

TABLE III. 6: REGISTER OF DAILY ATTENDANCE OF THE PUPILS AT.....SCHOOL FOR THE MONTH OF.....186 ..

Names of Pupils	Days of the month											Total Present	Total Absent	Total Holiday	No. of months in school	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	31						
																Month and Year
																Name of Patshala
																Thana
																When first joined by the tutor
																Total numbers on the rolls
																Hindus
																Mohammadans
																Others
																Total number present
																Amount of fees received during the month
																Amount of stipend
																Total number of days the tutor is absent from the school
																Authority for the same
																Total number of holidays
																State of progress
																Tutor's signature
																Signature and date of Deputy Inspector's visit

N. B. The roll calls must be twice every day. If the boy is present only on one of two occasions it is to be indicated thus ; 1 being the

mark for present, a boy not present in the forenoon will have the mark altered against his name thus T, a boy not present in the afternoon will be marked I. Late attendance in the forenoon thus A, in the afternoon V.

Source : *Report of Public Instruction in Bengal, 1863-64, Appendix A, p. 367.*

improved *Patshalas*. The class of schools being more advanced than the old *patshalas*, the new *gurus*, while willing to commence service on the income provided for them, were soon found to be unwilling to continue to serve happily on those terms. So fresh prospects had to be provided which, in its turn, led to added expenses. Moreover, the new *gurus* being dependent on the Government for their selection, training and allowance, came now to be looked upon by the people practically as outsiders depending on outside support and hence did not receive full co-operation. And, finally, economical though it was, the new scheme led the people to lean too heavily on the government thereby making the scheme rather expensive for the government to bear.³⁶

Since 1855 the attention of the Bengal government had turned towards devising some way of extending education to the masses. *Patshalas* were chosen as the means to achieving that end simply because they were cheap, popular, established in large number, and attended by children of the lower order. However, the 'circle' scheme, Grant's scheme and Bhudev's scheme all failed to achieve that objective. Considerable improvement on Departmental lines was no doubt induced but the *patshalas* failed to attract the masses. In fact, the effect of the earlier schemes had practically resulted in the desertion of the *patshalas* by the poorer pupils. In this sense, Bhudev's measures achieved limited success, in that children of the lower classes did not generally desert his improved *patshalas* although it failed to attract newcomers of the lower order to his schools. Indeed, Bhudev argued that *patshalas*, as they were then constituted,

36. This para is based on information given in, E. L. Harrison, 'The Midnapore System of Primary Education', *Calcutta Review*, vol. 63, 1876, p. 138.

could never become vehicles of mass education exclusively and his intentions had been to improve the *patshalas* without disturbing the class composition of the pupils. In other words, in so much as the government was anxious to promote the *patshalas* for the education of the masses, Bhudev was equally keen to ensure that the upper classes did not abandon the *patshalas*. His policy, therefore, had been to improve the *patshalas* and yet ensure that pupils of all orders of life (higher and lower) continued to attend as before. As he pointed out:

"the *patshalas* never were, and are not now, schools for the masses only. Children of the highest as well as of the lowest classes have always attended them, and continue to attend them at present. My endeavour has hitherto been to keep them in this respect what I found them. It was my aim to improve the *patshalas*, not to convert them into mass schools...It has been my care, therefore, from the very commencement of operations under myself, to guard against the desertion of my *patshalas* by the children of the lower classes and, I flatter myself that my exertions have not proved unsuccessful."³⁷

These remarks testify clearly that the improved *patshala* scheme did not really envisage an extension of education to the masses. The improvements to be implemented were not to be geared to attract the masses but rather as a form of extending control over the *patshalas*. The improvements were in reality changes designed to alter the very nature of the traditional *patshala*. As far as the masses were concerned, the objective was to see that enrolled pupils of the lower order did not drop off from these improved *patshalas*, no anxiety being apparently exhibited in the increase of their enrolment. This was no doubt a deviation from the objective of Grant who had floated the original scheme with the idea of reaching poorer sections of the community through the *patshalas*. Bhudev believed that increased educational expenditure held the key to any chance of success in

37. Cited in 'Mr. Monteath's Educational Minute', *Calcutta Review*, 1867, vol. 45, p. 435.

promoting education for the masses and declared that *patshalas* could never become mass schools exclusively unless the government was prepared to bear every common item of expenditure, supply books free of cost, and even provide occasional prizes to pupils in cash, or articles of food and clothing in kind, as inducements for regular attendance.³⁸

In its actual operation, the improved *patshala* scheme was started in 1862 with three training schools at Burdwan, Nadia, and Jessore. By the end of 1863, one hundred and eighty-two *patshalas* were brought under the operation of the scheme. The success of the scheme resulted in its expansion to six additional districts in 1864, namely, Bankura, Midnapur, Murshidabad, Rajshahi, Dinajpur and Rangpur. One training school was set up for the first three districts and three training schools were each opened for the remaining three districts. The progress of the *patshala* scheme was naturally accompanied by increased expenditure. By 1871-72, the improved *patshala* scheme was sustaining 1801 *patshalas* containing 45,702 pupils, costing government Rs 92,115, or a little over 2 rupees per pupil.³⁹ Although the amount of money spent had considerably shot up from the initial grant of Rs 30,000 sanctioned to implement Grant's scheme, it was still far from what was actually needed for the successful extension of the scheme.

Lack of adequate funding plagued all schemes which had been launched to promote education of the masses. A major aim of every successive scheme had been to promote more at a lesser cost. Funding became a key issue as the government strived to develop cheaper schemes for improving education. The problem had earlier been recognized in 1859 when Lord Stanley, in his Despatch of 1859, had pointed out the necessity of levying an educational rate to meet the needs of expenditure for elementary education.

From 1865, correspondence had taken place between the Government of India and the Government of Bengal regarding the provision

38. *Ibid.*

39. Harrison, p. 147.

of funds for the extension of lower class vernacular education in Bengal. It was urged by the Central Government, that as in the other Provinces, a cess should be levied in Bengal on the proprietors of land to raise funds for the elementary education of the agricultural classes, and an opinion was expressed that the amount levied ought not to be less than 2 percent on the net assets, on gross rental of the land.⁴⁰ The Bengal Government pleaded that the Permanent Settlement had earlier fixed the land revenue to be extracted from the Province, and as the land had changed hands many times since the first settlement, there were great difficulties in the way of such fresh imposition on land as were made in other parts of India.⁴¹ Moreover, it was held that any tax levied ought to be imposed not only on the landed classes but on other members of the community as well, e.g., business and commercial people, and the Bengal Government declared its support for a general tax on education rather than a tax upon land only.⁴² The controversy was ended by the Duke of Argyll's Despatch dated 12 May 1870 and resulted in no cess for the maintenance of elementary schools being imposed on land in Bengal.

The cess controversy brings to light two interesting points. It showed that the Central Government was well aware that it was not possible to extend elementary education in Bengal satisfactorily on its present allocation of funds and hence was searching for alternative means of fund raising. The Bengal Government was, on its part, well aware of the problem and equally keen to raise funds. But it was not prepared to sacrifice the interest of the landed classes to promote the education of the masses.

The improved *patshala* scheme was mainly confined to the nine

40. *Correspondence relative to the expediency of raising an educational cess in Bengal*, pp. 34-49.

41. *BPC*, p. 29.

42. *Ibid.*

Also, see Buckland, pp. 439-455 and

R. C. Mitra, 'Education' in N. K. Sinha, ed., *History of Bengal (1757-1905)*, University of Calcutta, Calcutta, 1967, p. 442 for useful discussion on the cess controversy.

districts mentioned earlier, i.e., Burdwan, Nadia, Jessore, Bankura, Midnapur, Murshidabad, Rajshahi, Dinajpur and Rangpur. These districts belonged to the Central, North-Central, South-West and North-East Divisions of Bengal. Table VII presents a picture of the distribution of improved *patshalas*.

TABLE III. 7 : DIVISIONAL DISTRIBUTION OF
IMPROVED *PATSHALAS* : 1870-71

Division	Number of improved indigenous <i>patshalas</i>	Number on the rolls (monthly average)
Central	191	5,463
North-Central	519	13,863
South-East	1	197
South-West	476	14,797
North-East	488	10,364
North-West	16	420
TOTAL	1,695	45,104

Source : A. P. Howell, 'Education in British India', 1870-71, in *Selections From Educational Records*, Government of India, Volume 1 : Educational Reports 1859-71, Delhi, 1960, p. 367.

It is clear from the table that the South-East and North-West divisions were practically untouched by the improved *patshala* scheme. Interestingly, the North-East Division, composed principally of Muslims, displayed an eagerness to improvement almost on a par with the Hindu-dominated Central, North-Central and South-West divisions. This is important because Muslims had always been

thought of as being less sensitive to the need of getting a secular education.⁴³ It indicates that the government policy of control was to be applied to both Hindu and Muslim dominated divisions and that the Muslims were now becoming slowly aware of the advantages of improved instruction.

It is not to be forgotten that the 'circle' system was still being carried on even while the *patshala* system was flourishing. The 'circle' system, as we have seen, was largely confined to the South East and Central Divisions. Thus, the 'circle' system was not extended to Northern Bengal and the improved *patshala* scheme was untried in Eastern Bengal whereas both systems were tried in Western (Central) Bengal. The following figures present a comparative picture of the progress of the two schemes :⁴⁴

	Circle System	Normal System
1864-65	302	380
1865-66	307	539
1866-67	398	883
1867-68	336	1,213
1868-69	298	1,520

These statistics show clearly that the Normal system was the dominant scheme, improving and bringing under government control more *patshalas* and maintaining a steady level of expansion. The

43. Muslims were generally considered to be lagging behind Hindus in getting secular education. The Muslim mass was more illiterate than the Hindus and averse to any form of change.

See, R. C. Majumdar, *Glimpses of Bengal in the Nineteenth Century*, Calcutta, 1960, p. 50 ;

Leonard A. Gordon, *Bengal: The Nationalist Movement, 1876-1940*, Manohar Book Service, Delhi, 1974, p. 5 ; and

Marcus F. Franda, *Radical Politics in West Bengal*, The M. I. T. Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, and London, England, 1971, p. 10.

44. *BPC*, p. 28.

'circle' system, on the other hand, reached its peak by 1866-67, after which date the number of *patshalas* under the scheme began to fall off.

To sum up, this chapter has shown that after the Despatch of 1854 the Bengal government became involved in the task of promoting elementary education. Since available funding was insufficient for the setting up of an independent system of elementary schools, the government opted to utilise the *patshalas* for disseminating elementary education to the masses. This necessarily meant for the government taking over control of the *patshalas*. The government's attempts at extending control over the *patshalas* was accompanied by important changes which affected the very nature of the traditional *patshala*. These changes, termed Departmentally as 'improvements', were introduced to strengthen the government's authority over the *patshalas*, to upgrade the *patshalas* to Education Department standards, and to bring the *patshalas* under the supervision and effective control of the Education Department.

The government adopted mainly two different schemes, the 'circle' system and the 'normal' school system, to achieve its aim of extending an improved education to the masses. Both systems were based on working with the already existing *patshalas* but the mode of operation was completely different. Both systems were tried in certain Divisions only, and as such, many districts were left completely untouched by any government innovation whatsoever. Both schemes failed in their original objective of using the *patshalas* as vehicles for disseminating an improved instruction to the children of the 'ordinary agriculturist'. As it happened, the improvements introduced were of much too high a level for the ordinary villager to comprehend and these schools came to be largely attended not by children of the lower classes but by those belonging to the higher order.

By the mid-1860s the Bengal government faced a dilemma. Its dual objective of extending education to the masses and giving an improved instruction as well was clearly floundering. The attempts to convert the *patshalas* into schools on the departmental model (which was part of the government's policy of taking over control

of *patshalas*) had the opposite effect of what the government expected. It drew away the masses from these schools instead of attracting them to it. The *patshalas* had always in the past been attended by lower class pupils, and the government's reforming measures had the negative effect of driving them away from these schools and depriving them of any instruction whatsoever. In other words, the *patshalas* were being gradually converted and elevated into exclusive schools of the higher order. Even Bhudev's compromise measures failed. They succeeded in stopping the drop-out of lower class pupils but failed to attract new pupils from the lower class to his improved *patshalas*. In fact, the failure of the masses to accept the improved *patshalas* raised the debate as to whether the *patshalas* were really mass institutions or could be developed as such. The promoters of the *patshala* scheme failed to see that the improvements proposed had very little relevance to the needs of the masses. They were expecting the masses to appreciate measures meant really for the benefit of the upper classes. Hence the failure of the scheme comes as no surprise.

The improved *patshala* scheme involved changes which affected the very nature of the traditional *patshala*. The *guru*, the key figure of the *patshala*, was no longer to exercise unquestioned authority. The *gurus* seeking or submitting to Departmental patronage would have to give up the absolute control of the *patshalas* which they had enjoyed earlier. They were now required to submit to Departmental regulations which clearly spelt out what was to be taught in the *patshalas*, how it was to be taught, how discipline was to be maintained and how, in general, the *patshala* was to be made more efficient. The *guru* would now have to operate within clearly defined guidelines. He would have to conduct *patshalas*, not as he thought best, but as wanted by the Education Department. His authority was effectively undermined and he was transformed into a servant of the Department.

The government attempt at improvement was limited to a very small number of *patshalas* in particular districts. By 1871-72, only

1801 *patshalas* with 45,702 pupils had been improved.⁴⁵ It was estimated that at this time there were about 4,000,000 boys of school-going age in Bengal.⁴⁶ Clearly, the number of *patshalas* and pupils brought under the control of the Education Department and subjected to improvements was very small, and most *patshalas* continued to function as before in their old traditional manner.

Finally, in the period under consideration (1854-71), the funds available for the extension of governmental control over *patshalas* was very limited. Lack of adequate funding developed as a major obstacle for the promotion of mass education. The cess controversy showed that the government was aware of the problem but unwilling to sacrifice the interest of the landed classes. It was clear however, that if the government really wanted to extend its control over the *patshalas*, it would have to generate more funds in this sector.

45. Harrison, p. 147.

46. *Ibid.*, p. 146.

CHAPTER IV

GEORGE CAMPBELL AND THE RAPID EXPANSION OF GOVERNMENT CONTROL : 1872-1882

The period 1854 to 1871 witnessed the beginning of government efforts to take over control of the indigenous *patshalas*. The attempts at control resulted in various changes being induced which affected the very nature of the traditional *patshala*. Those *patshalas* which submitted to government control were gradually converted into schools on the Departmental model. In the process, these *patshalas* lost those very characteristics which had helped to make it attractive, popular, and useful to the masses. As such, the lower classes began to keep away from the government controlled *patshalas* and these institutes now came to be attended almost entirely by pupils of the better classes. However, owing to lack of sufficient funds, the government plan of controlling the *patshalas* achieved limited success. Only a fraction of the *patshalas* were actually affected by the government measures and the overwhelming majority continued to function undisturbed in their traditional manner.

The government was not content with its limited success and was constantly searching for cheaper means of extending greater control over the *patshalas*. This chapter will basically examine the policies of Sir George Campbell to bring large numbers of *patshalas* under government control. Campbell launched a great drive to extend wider control over the *patshalas* and made available a liberal sum of money to achieve quick effective results. New strategies of exerting control were also now developed. Scholarships, competitive examinations and a system of payment by results were introduced to strengthen government control over elementary education. An attempt will be

made in this chapter to assess the effects of Campbell's policies ; to note district/regional variations and responses ; and to try and bring out the general structural changes which ensued in the traditional *patshalas* following the implementation of his policies.

Following the controversy regarding the imposition of an educational cess, it was determined by the Secretary of State, in August 1871, that the question of providing primary education for the general population would henceforth be left at the complete discretion of the Lieutenant-Governor.¹ On 30 September 1872, the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, Sir George Campbell, issued a Resolution which marked the beginning of a new drive aimed at bringing *patshalas* under government control. The resolution announced that a major objective of the government would be to support the extension of primary education among the masses of the people and specially allotted Rs 4 lakhs (Rs 4,00,000) for developing and encouraging indigenous education in the villages.² This new allotment of funds came from provincial savings and was in addition to the normal budget grant of Rs 1,30,000 a year. The actual total allotment for primary education was, therefore, Rs 5,30,000, and this represented a more than four fold increase over funding in previous years. In the previous decade, lack of adequate funds had proved to be a major problem in the government's attempts to extend control over the *patshalas*. The new liberal grant now announced was no doubt intended to offset that problem and was an indication of the determination of the government to continue with the general plan of controlling elementary education.

The resolution not only announced the new funding allocation but also gave details of the way in which the money was to be spent. It was expressly stated that the money granted was to be utilized in promoting indigenous education based on local standards. The subjects to be taught would mainly be the old *patshala* subjects of reading, writing, and arithmetic. The language of instruction would

1. C. E. Buckland *Bengal Under the Lieutenant Governors*, two volumes, Calcutta, 1902, volume I, p. 526.

2. *Education Proceedings*, No. III, November, 1872.

be the vernacular only. Printed books were not to be compulsorily used but were to be introduced cautiously.

When recruiting teachers, preference was to be given to men of the old *guru* class and to residents of the village and its neighbourhood. This was an important development; for we have seen that in the past many of the *gurus* recruited had been total newcomers to the profession. The appointment of newcomers and outsiders as *gurus* was now to be positively discouraged. The idea of choosing *patshala* teachers from the old *guru* class had no doubt been prompted by the desire to ensure popular acceptance of these institutes. The resolution also advocated the setting up of normal schools at the district/sub-divisional level for the training of village school-masters. A *guru* attending normal school would have to leave a substitute to manage his school temporarily until his return from training. In the selection of *gurus* for normal school training preference was to be given to fresh appointees rather than to the old *gurus*. It was recognized that old *gurus* would be less likely to submit to change and hence would not serve the actual purpose of the normal school.³ Newly appointed masters, who had never taught previously in *patshalas*, would clearly accept new acquirements or modes of teaching much more easily than old *gurus*. Hence, they were the logical choice of being prospective normal school candidates. At the same time, this attitude reveals the deeper motives of the scheme. Although the old *gurus* were to be retained, wherever possible, the ideas of change set in motion in the earlier period were clearly to be nourished and not abandoned.

Care was to be taken to ensure that what was taught in these schools was in line with the natural interests of the ordinary village people. The old *patshala* course was to be closely adhered to with the possible addition of the use of printed work, and the teaching of subjects like Geography and History were to be discouraged. In fact, any kind of teaching which might induce boys to think themselves above manual labour was not to be practised. However, in order to

3. *Ibid.*

provide a ladder to the odd brilliant pupil, a chain of scholarships was to be instituted, whereby scholarship holders could move up through the several grades of schools to a University degree. The subjects of examination for the *patshala* scholarship was to be the same as that of the ordinary *patshala* course ; reading and writing the vernacular, simple and mental arithmetic, *zamindari* and *mahajani* accounts and mensuration. It was realized that a higher scholarship course for *patshala* examinees would lead to the tendency for general adoption of that course in the *patshalas*. Hence, the course of studies was kept similar to contain any tendencies of higher teaching in the *patshalas*.

Schools submitting to government directions would receive grants at the rate of Rs 2 to Rs 5 per mensem depending on circumstances. The higher rate would usually be given to areas where the people were poor and backward. No *patshala* grant would be given to a village which did not provide a hut to be used as the school. Grants would be available to existing *patshalas* and also for setting up new *patshalas*. In the selection of new *patshalas*, large villages having no schools were to be given preference. The administering of the grant was to be left in the hands of the District Magistrates and Sub-Divisional Officers, who were given the discretion to work out the details of the scheme as dictated by local conditions. The Magistrate, in sanctioning grants, would have to ensure that not more than Rs 5 per mensem was given to any one school. All *patshalas* seeking grants would have to submit to inspection and send in simple quarterly statements as required by the government. And, only those schools where the vernacular was taught would be considered for grants. The grants sanctioned would be conditional to the proper fulfilment of government directives and could be suspended or withdrawn if the school was not properly kept up. Thus, the Magistrates, although given independent control of the scheme, were actually handed out clear guidelines within which to operate. They were given the freedom to develop the scheme in their own way but only after observing the general conditions laid out by the government.⁴

4. This paragraph is based on information given in the above proceeding.

The new system of primary education set up by Campbell's resolution also aimed basically at extending government control over the indigenous *patshalas* but with a difference. It was now insisted that *patshalas* submitting to government control would be improved only on condition that their continued existence as schools for the masses was not jeopardized, i. e. improved *patshalas* were to continue to exist as *paishalas* and not to be converted into schools of the Departmental model.⁵ The order of instructions usually followed in the *patshalas* was not to be changed and if any books were read they were to be of the simplest kind. The old and popular *gurus* were to be retained wherever possible and the appointment of newcomers as *gurus* was to be discouraged. These measures were adopted basically to retain the popular appeal of the *patshalas* as mass institutes and to ensure that the masses continued to be attracted to it.

But despite reorientation of measures towards *patshala* practices, the government clearly planned to continue with the policy of holding control over the *patshalas*. This is apparent from the fact that *patshalas* seeking government grants would have to submit to inspection and send quarterly statements as required by the government. The *gurus* would still have to attend normal schools and the use of printed books was to be slowly and carefully introduced. In other words, government would continue to dictate and control *patshalas* as they pleased and a *patshala* not satisfactorily following government directives would be deprived of any grant earlier sanctioned.

The introduction of scholarships can also be seen as an instrument of control and yet another means of exacting submission to government authority. *Patshalas* hoping to gain scholarships would have to follow rules set up by the government.⁶ Pupils competing for scholarships would have to participate in examinations held at subdivisional centres. Annual examinations of this kind had never been in force in *patshalas* before and they were a new concept set in motion to enforce government control.

5, *Education Proceeding*, No. 9-12, File 70, November, 1881.

6. For details of Primary Scholarship Rules, see Chapter IV, Appendix A.

The institution of scholarships for *patshala* pupils introduced a new element in rural society. The scholarships were clearly an incentive to pupils, a recognition for having successfully mastered the government prescribed standard. In concrete terms, a candidate on being awarded a scholarship, would benefit financially at the rate of Rs 3 a month (a considerable sum in those days) for two years in order to pursue education on a higher level in a higher school (see Chapter IV, Appendix A). The scholarship, therefore, was a passport to higher education at government cost. As such, those parents who wanted their children to aspire for the scholarship, would definitely prefer a *patshala* which instructed efficiently to the government prescribed scholarship standard. Thus, the *guru*, as a result of the institution of scholarships, was now subjected to some local pressure to reorganize his course of studies in accordance with that of the Education Department.

Campbell's scheme was not only concerned with existing indigenous *patshalas* but also contemplated setting up new *patshalas* on indigenous lines in places where none existed. Unlike previous schemes, which were limited to particular districts, the new scheme was adopted at the same time all over Bengal and achieved considerable success in a relatively short period. The following figures indicate the extent to which control extended in the first few years.

TABLE IV. 1 : PROGRESS OF CAMPBELL'S SCHEME
(1870-1877)

Year	Schools	Scholars	Government Expenditure (Rs)
1870-71	2,486	68,044	Not available
1872-73	8,253	205,934	1,80,592
1873-74	12,229	303,437	3,86,833
1874-75	13,145	330,024	4,42,699
1875-76	13,491	357,233	4,35,207
1876-77	13,966	360,513	3,86,784

Source : *Report of the Education Commission*, 1882, p. 102.

The above figures include all schools, newly established or aided under the primary grant. It may be pointed out here, that the launching of Campbell's scheme did not mark the end of the earlier Bhudev's improved *patshala* scheme. These *patshala*, departmentally termed as 'D' *patshalas*, continued to operate as before in the districts where they had been started. The figures in Table I include all 'D' *patshalas*. Thus, in 1873-74, out of a total of 12,229 primary schools, 2,040 were 'D' *patshalas*, 9,645 were *patshalas* under Campbell's new scheme, 320 were grant-in-aid lower schools and 22 Government lower schools.⁷ With the success of the Campbell *patshalas* (termed Departmentally as 'E' *patshalas*) the 'D' *patshalas* began to lose ground and by 1876 their number fell to 1,745, at which point the two classes of schools were finally amalgamated and the distinction disappeared from the returns.⁸

Table IV. I shows the extent to which government succeeded in bringing (and raising) *patshalas* under its control. Clearly, both the number of schools and scholars increased steadily during these years, though the rate of increase was much less during the latter part. Apparently, the increased government funding had the desired effect and succeeded in considerably expanding governmental control over elementary education.

The figures given in Table IV. I do not show either how many new *patshalas* were created or how many of the previously existing *patshalas* were now aided from the primary grants. Campbell's scheme aimed not only to support existing *patshalas* but also to set up new ones where needed. In fact, a popular criticism of the scheme was that it merely granted aid to already existing schools and did not really create any new *patshalas*.⁹ Unfortunately, the Reports of the Director of public Instruction in Bengal do not provide any systematic statistical information on the above point. However, isolated references in the different Reports make it plainly clear that many new *patshalas* were no doubt established under Campbell's

7. *RPIB*, 1873-74, p. 1.

8. *REC*, 1882, p. 100.

9. *RPIB*, 1874-75, p. 25.

scheme. As was to be expected, these *patshalas* were erected mainly in those districts where indigenous schools were very few in number. Thus, there was little need to set up *patshalas* in the districts of Western Bengal, where indigenous schools already abounded in large numbers and hence, most of the new 'E' *patshalas* were established in the different districts of Eastern Bengal where *patshalas* were relatively scarce. The following table will illustrate the point :

TABLE IV. 2 : NEW *PATSHALAS* STARTED UNDER CAMPBELL'S SCHEME

Districts	Number of 'E' <i>patshalas</i> on 31 March 1875	Pre-existing <i>patshalas</i> subsidized	<i>Patshalas</i> started under the primary scheme
Dhaka	200	111	87
Faridpur	191	20	171
Barisal	244	124	120
Mymensingh	256	30	226
TOTAL	891	285	606

Source : *Report of Public Instruction in Bengal, 1874-75*, p. 24.

These figures show that in the above districts most of the *patshalas* owed their existence to Campbell's scheme. Out of 891 *patshalas*, only 285 or 32 percent were in existence before September 1872, the remaining 606 or 68 percent having been set up under the new scheme. This, no doubt, indicates that a sizeable portion of pupils now had an access to schooling who would otherwise have grown up without having had the opportunity of attending school.

Not only did the Campbell scheme set up new schools, but it was also indirectly instrumental in the establishment of many new *patsha-*

las organized by the people themselves. The expectation of getting aid provided a stimulus in this direction. The district of Tippera (Comilla) in 1873-74 showed that of the 175 unaided *patshalas*, 164 had been started after 1872 and only 11 existed before that date.¹⁰ No doubt this sudden mushrooming of *patshalas* was an important side-effect of the new policy. Campbell's measures were successful not only in extending control over a large number of *patshalas* but were also responsible in the creation of new *patshalas* which were, from their very birth, committed and resigned to submit to Departmental control in the expectation of getting government aid. All such *patshalas* were not immediately taken over by the Department. Available funding simply did not permit the absorption of these *patshalas*. Many of these *patshalas* therefore continued to function in the shadow of the Department, unaided but hopeful of eventually receiving Departmental grants.

The figures in Table IV. 1 showed a considerable decrease in government expenditure for the last year under consideration. This was in line with the general retrenchment ordered by the Government of Bengal in 1876-77 to meet the change in financial position necessitated by the surrendering of accumulated balances to the Government of India as partial liquidation of the liabilities incurred by Bengal during the famine of 1874.¹¹ In order to meet these reductions, district officers resorted to various schemes aimed at preventing the diminution of the grant from seriously injuring the progress of education.

The Magistrate of Midnapur, H. L. Harrison, on the introduction of the new scheme, had pointed out that the stipendiary system with provision for erecting new schools was not best suited for his district. Midnapur already abounded in numerous *patshalas* and he felt that the government grant would be better utilized in taking control of these *patshalas* rather than in establishing completely new schools. He, therefore, proposed to utilize the funds by rewarding

10. *Ibid.* p. 27.

11. *Resolution on RPIB*, 1876-77, General Department, Education No. 43, Calcutta, p. 1.

the *gurus* making periodical returns and submitting to inspection and also to pay them according to results achieved in examinations to be held annually.

In actual practice, Harrison's proposals assumed the following form. The district was sub-divided into sub-circles having a radius of roughly five miles. To each sub-circle was attached a sub-centre where *gurus* of the *patshalas* within the sub-circle were invited to attend annually with their pupils for examination and rewards. Only those *patshalas* which had maintained regular registers of attendance and contained a minimum of ten pupils throughout the year were eligible to participate in the examination. The actual examination was jointly conducted by two sub-inspectors. The subjects of examination were reading, writing, elementary and mental arithmetic, and *Zamindari* and *Mahajani* accounts. There were two different standards of examination for the candidates. The lower standard was restricted to a pupil's ability in being able to read fluently both from print and written manuscript, to write from dictation legibly, and to work simple sums in the first four rules of arithmetic. The higher standard required candidates to be thoroughly proficient in being able to read and write or sum fluently and easily. The grant for passing each subject in the lower standard was 8 annas and Rs 1 was allotted for similar achievement in the higher standard. Of the successful candidates, the best three or four pupils were granted tickets of admission to the primary scholarship examination. In order to prevent the larger well attended *patshalas* in advanced parts of the district from monopolizing the grant, a fixed stipend of one rupee a year was sanctioned to every *patshala* sending in regular returns, and a further additional allowance of Rs 3 a year was given to every *patshala* that had reached its second year of continuous existence and examination, and had also maintained regular registers.¹²

It is clear then, that the principle of the Midnapur system was for the *gurus* to be assisted and encouraged but not superseded ; that they

12. This paragraph has been largely constructed from information given in *Education proceedings*, No. 9-12, File 70, November 1881.

were to be left to manage their *patshalas* as before and that the *gurus* themselves would be the agents of their own improvement.¹³ But this improvement would be brought about by bringing *gurus* under inspection, making them submit to Departmental regulations and paying them by results. The *patshala* pupils were now required to submit to annual competitive examinations in standards determined by the Department. The Education Department would control the entire examination process, right from the selection of participating *patshalas* down to the assessment of pupils sitting for the exam. The pupils' performance in this exam would now determine the amount of grant to be earned by the *patshala*. The *guru* would no longer receive a fixed, regular, stipend. His income would now depend on how efficiently he taught the pupils in the subjects of examination. The payment by results system was instituted to ensure that maximum assistance and encouragement was given to those *gurus* who most exerted themselves to comply with Departmental directives.¹⁴

The Midnapur system of payment by results was highly successful in bringing a large number of children under government control. By 1875-76, nearly 50,000 children—one tenth of the whole number returned for Bengal—were known to be at school in the single district of Midnapur.¹⁵ Further, this remarkable expansion of government control had been achieved without involving any additional outlay of funds than what had been normally assigned for the purpose. The total cost to government of each Midnapur *patshala* annually was less than Rs 9, whereas the average cost of such *patshalas* throughout the country amounted Rs 27-6 annas.¹⁶

The Midnapur scheme achieved what the government desired, i.e., to bring large numbers of *patshalas* under government control at minimum cost. It now opened up to the government the possibilities

13. H. L. Harrison, 'The Midnapur System of Primary Education', *Calcutta Review*, 1876, vol. 63, p. 151.

14. *Ibid.*

15. *Resolution on RPIB*, 1875-76, General Department, Education', No. 3180, Calcutta, p. 3.

16. *Education Proceedings*, No. 3-5, File 9, January 1877.

TABLE IV. 3 : NUMBER OF PUPILS WHICH WOULD BE
AT SCHOOL IN DIFFERENT DISTRICTS IF THE
MIDNAPUR SYSTEM WAS ADOPTED

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	
District	Population	Number of children at school	Number at school per 1000 of population	Number which would be at school if the Midnapur average was reached	Difference between columns 3 and 5
24-Pargana	2,210,047	47,000	21.2	43,256	
Midnapur	2,540,963	49,733	19.5	49,733	
Bankura	526,772	10,118	19.2	10,310	192
Nadia	1,812,795	28,899	15.9	35,481	6,582
Birbhum	695,921	10,839	15.6	13,621	2,782
Hooghly with					
Howrah	1,488,556	21,603	14.5	29,134	7,531
Burdwan	2,034,745	27,165	13.3	39,825	12,660
Jessore	2,075,021	26,242	12.6	40,613	14,371
Dhaka	1,852,993	21,214	11.4	36,268	15,054
Murshidabad	1,353,626	14,644	10.8	26,494	11,830
Barisal	1,714,390	16,929	9.7	33,555	16,626
Chittagong	1,006,422	8,462	8.5	19,698	11,236
Pabna	1,211,594	9,665	7.9	23,714	14,049
Rajshahi	1,310,729	10,051	7.6	25,654	15,603
Tippera					
(Comilla)	1,419,229	10,458	7.3	27,777	17,319
Faridpur	1,675,632	12,173	7.2	32,796	20,623
Noakhali	949,616	6,640	6.9	18,586	11,946
Malda	676,426	4,358	6.4	13,239	8,881
Mymensingh	2,349,917	13,554	5.7	45,993	32,439
Bogra	689,467	3,695	5.3	13,494	9,799
Rangpur	2,149,972	11,090	5.1	42,080	30,990
Dinajpur	1,501,924	5,525	3.7	29,397	23,872

Source : *Education Proceedings*, No. 3-5, File 9, January 1877.

of what could be achieved in other districts by similar application. Statistics were now compiled by the Education Department to highlight the spectacular success of the Midnapur scheme and to show the number which would be at school if the Midnapur standard were reached everywhere. These statistics, enumerated in Table IV. 3, also present us with a comparative picture of the relative performance of different districts with regard to schooling (see preceding page).

Midnapur was clearly the outstanding district having brought in more children to school than any other district. Only the district of 24-pargana showed a better performance than Midnapur with regard to the ratio of children at school and population. This was probably because the metropolis of Calcutta fell in the 24-pargana district and no doubt swelled its figures. If the other districts had succeeded as well as Midnapur, the number of children at school would have increased by a massive 76.8% over what it then showed. In other words, the payment by results system, as adopted in Midnapur, proved to be remarkably successful in extending government control over *patshalas* as compared to other districts where the system of fixed stipends was in operation.

The table also showed that the progress of education in the different districts of Bengal was far from uniform. A wide degree of variation existed between districts, with 24-pargana recording 21.2 pupils per thousand of population as opposed to a mere 3.7 for Dinajpur. If we group district figures under their respective divisions, we can form an idea of the relative progress of education in the different regions of Bengal :

		Number at school per 1000 of population
24-parganas, Nadia, Jessore	— Presidency Division	— 16.5
Burdwan, Bankura, Birbhum	Midnapur,	
Hoogly and Howrah	— Burdwan Division	— 16.4
Dhaka, Faridpur,		
Barisal, Mymensingh	— Dhaka Division	— 8.5

		Number at school per 1000 of population
Chittagong, Noakhali, Tippera (Comilla)	— Chittagong Division —	7.5
Rajshahi, Murshidabad, Dinajpur, Rangpur, Malda, Bogra, Pabna	— Rajshahi Division —	6.6

These figures show that the Northern and Eastern Bengal regions were clearly lagging much behind Western Bengal in relation to the number of pupils at school compared to population. In fact, West Bengal's progress was more than double of what had been in the other regions.

The Bengal Government repeatedly drew the attention of other district authorities to the success of the Midnapure scheme and urged its general adoption. However, the Midnapur system was not adopted *in toto* but rather modifications of the payment by results scheme were worked out by different district officers to meet the special needs of individual districts. The object was to maintain the growth of primary education despite reduced grants. Accordingly, district officers endeavoured to devise ways by which government control over *patshalas* could be extended without involving additional outlay of funds.

In Chittagong, *patshala* grants were initially given in three grades of Rs 5, 4, and 3, according to the quality of education imparted. To meet the increased pressure on funding in 1875-76 (caused by the general retrenchment ordered by the government of Bengal), the Magistrate Mr. Kirkwood, reduced the *patshala* grants to a uniform level of Rs 3 each and with the surplus money created a reward fund. He next divided the district into seven centres and 70 sub-centres. Aided *patshala* pupils gaining one-third and unaided *patshala* pupils gaining one-fifth of the total marks at the sub-central examinations were allowed to sit for the centre examination. Successful pupils of ten sub-centres were grouped together and

examined in one centre, and seven primary scholarships were given to those boys who stood first in each of the seven centres (for details of scholarship rules, see Chapter IV, Appendix A). Besides, rewards varying from Rs 10 to Rs 2 were handed out to others who passed the centre examinations creditably and rewards were also given to teachers of the successful candidates.¹⁷

In neighbouring Noakhali district, a completely different system was adopted. The Magistrate, Mr. Porch, here decided to revert to the old circle system as being best suited for his district. Circles were formed consisting of between three to six *patshalas* and an inspecting *guru* attached. The inspecting *guru* was required to teach his own *patshala* daily and to visit the other *patshalas* in his circle at least four times a month. For this extra labour, the circle *guru* was to get a grant of one rupee for every pupil in his circle passing the primary scholarship examination.¹⁸

In Dhaka and Barisal, a modified system of payment by results was adopted whereby the *guru's* grant was decreased or increased depending on the report submitted by the inspecting officer.¹⁹ In the 24-pargana and Murshidabad districts, a system was devised based on the combination of fixed payment with payment-by-results. Under this scheme, examinations would be held quarterly instead of yearly. The examination would be held *in situ*, i.e., in the village schools themselves and not at fixed centres. The fixed payment would apply to places where frequent supervision was difficult and a variable payment by results would be used for giving grants to *patshalas* in places where regular inspection was possible.²⁰ Burdwan and Birbhum were operating grants on the basis of graduated stipends or yearly rewards; Hooghly and Howrah were handing out monthly stipends exclusively, and Bankura worked on a system combining equal parts of payment-by-results and monthly stipends.²¹

17. *RPIB*, 1875-76, p. 24.

18. *Ibid.*, pp. 24-25.

19. *RPIB*, 1874-75, p. 23.

20. *RPIB*, 1876-77, pp. 14-15.

21. *Ibid.*, p. 17.

The Northern Bengal districts of the Rajshahi division operated on the basis of fixed stipends, and it was only after 1877-78 that payment by results system was started here in three districts, viz., Dinajpur, Rajshahi, and Rangpur.²² The system adopted was a combination of both mixing fixed stipends with rewards based on the result of examination.

Thus, it is clear that even while districts were experimenting with the payment-by-result system, other methods of grants were operating as well. The various systems of distributing grants were all adopted to attain maximum extension of government control at minimum cost. All the systems enforced involved closer inspection and submission to Departmental authority. Failure to comply with Departmental regulations would mean withdrawal of grants. Different systems (or combination of systems) were adopted in different divisions/districts because of the differing local conditions. The target was to achieve maximum expansion of control over the *patshalas* and the various systems of administering grants had all been developed to achieve that end. The Midnapur system of payment-by-results was strongly recommended by the government for general adoption primarily because it had proved to be highly successful in achieving rapid expansion at minimal cost.

Speaking generally, the system of administering primary grants developed gradually into the following three categories :²³

- (1) Stipendiary *patshalas*, the teachers of which submitted to Departmental inspection and control, and received fixed stipends, either monthly, quarterly or annually.
- (2) Rewarded *patshalas*, which submitted to regular inspection and received rewards in accordance with the results of examination held centrally or *in situ*.
- (3) Registered *patshalas*, which received a small grant for the submission of returns,

By 1877-78, nearly half of the districts of Bengal had adopted the

22. *RPIB*, 1877-78, p. 18.

23. *Ibid.*, p. 16.

payment-by-results system and by 1881-82, it practically superseded the fixed grant system all over Bengal.

The following yearly returns show the corresponding increase in schools and scholars as the payment by results system was being more generally adopted :

TABLE IV. 4 : PROGRESS OF SCHOOLS
(1876-77—1881-82)

Year	Schools	Pupils	Government Expenditure Rs
1876-77	13,966	360,513	3,75,000
1877-78	17,395	406,135	3,35,149
1878-79	24,354	489,518	3,99,200
1879-80	30,414	582,992	3,88,635
1880-81	37,501	671,723	4,07,286
1881-82	47,402	836,351	5,30,715

Source : *Report of the Education Commission*, 1882, p. 103.

It is evident from the above table that the system of payment by results (and other temporary expedients adopted by different districts), instituted to increase government control over *patshalas* with limited means, did achieve considerable success. In 1876-77, government spent Rs 3,75,000 for 13,966 schools submitting to the authority of the Education Department and yet by 1881-82 47,402 schools were being sustained on Rs 5,30,715. This meant that with an increase in expenditure of about 38%, the government in 1881-82, was able to bring under its control more than three times the number of schools it had in 1876-77.

We are now in a position to assess the growth of primary education over the decade 1871 to 1881. The following table gives us the necessary figures :

TABLE IV. 5 : RETURN OF PRIMARY SCHOOLS AND SCHOLARS

(For the year ending 31 March, 1871)

Class of Schools	Government		Aided		Unaided		Total	
	Schools	Pupils in primary section	Schools	Pupils in primary section	Schools	Pupils in primary section	Schools	Pupils in primary section
High School	53	2,926	80	2,520	19	1,061	152	6,507
Middle English	8	460	551	15,831	59	1,442	618	17,733
Middle Vernacular	209	8,200	769	24,057	64	1,448	1,042	33,705
Primary Schools	46	1,557	2,152	59,618	357	9,977	2,555	71,152
Total Boys Schools	316	13,143	3,552	102,026	499	13,928	4,367	129,097
Girls Schools	1	70	287	6,799	26	499	314	7,368
Total Primary „	317	13,213	3,839	108,825	525	14,427	4,681	136,465

Continued

TABLE IV.5 (continued)
(For the year ending 31 March 1881)

Class of Schools	Government		Aided		Unaided		Total	
	Schools	Pupils in primary section	Schools	Pupils in primary section	Schools	Pupils in primary section	Schools	Pupils in primary section
High Schools	48	4,021	98	3,606	72	4,714	218	12,341
Middle English	10	773	455	17,311	123	3,831	588	21,915
Middle Vernacular	172	6,751	769	27,958	87	3,235	1,025	37,944
Lower Vernacular	9	293	1,632	56,582	60	2,443	1,701	59,318
Primary Schools	10	266	35,992	618,062	5,697	83,240	41,699	701,568
Total Boys Schools	249	12,104	38,946	723,519	6,039	97,463	45,234	833,086
Girls Schools	2	307	719	15,513	107	3,607	828	19,427
Total Primary	251	12,411	39,665	739,032	6,146	101,070	46,062	852,513

Source : *Education Proceedings*, No. 9-12, File 70, Nov. 1881,

The decade following Campbell's resolution was highly successful from the government's point of view, in that a large number of schools had been brought under their control. If we omit primary sections of higher schools (termed Departmentally as secondary schools) the total number of aided boys' schools brought on the Departmental list went up from 2,152 with 59,618 pupils in 1871 to 35,992 with 618,062 scholars. This meant that the decade had witnessed more than sixteen fold increase in the number of aided schools and more than ten times increase in pupil enrolment. And all this had been achieved with only a three fold increase in expenditure.²⁴ The number of unaided schools and scholars moved up from 357 schools with 9,977 pupils in 1871 to 5,697 with 83,240 pupils in 1881. This list of unaided schools includes only those which were known to exist to the Education Department. No doubt there were many more unaided *patshalas* functioning in small and remote villages of which the Department was unaware and hence not included in their counting. The fact that the number of unaided schools had gone up is very important as it indicates that the government was trying to keep record of the existence of unaided *patshalas*, possibly with the future aim of bringing them under its fold. At the same time, it also implied that several *patshalas* were now cropping up, organized by the people themselves, imbued by Campbell's measures and hoping for government recognition and aid. Overall, calculating from the table, in 1871 (taking primary school pupils only) approximately 1 per 1000 out of a population of 66 millions was receiving government-recognized elementary instruction; in 1881 (the population of Bengal being taken at 68 millions) more than 10 per 1000 was getting similar instruction.²⁵

24. The budget grant for primary education in 1870-71 is not available (see Table IV. 1) but Buckland reported that prior to 1872-73, the grant had usually stood at about Rs 1,30,000 a year. The expenditure in 1880-81 was Rs 4,07,286. So, if we take Rs 1,30,000 to have been the grant for 1870-71, then the increased expenditure in 1880-81 amounted to slightly higher than three times that in 1870-71. See, Euckland, p. 526.

25. Population figures have been taken as supplied by A. W. Croft in *Education Proceedings*, No. 9-12, File 70, November 1881.

Campbell's scheme was not only successful in the expansion of government control over *patshalas* but was also decidedly cheaper than the former improved *patshala* scheme. On 31 March 1874, Rs 1,68,060 was spent on 2,032 'D' *patshalas* (Bhudev *patshalas*) with 54,236 pupils whereas Rs 4,64,291 was spent on 8,654 'E' *patshalas* (Campbell *patshalas*) having 231,323 pupils.²⁶ Approximately, the annual cost of each 'D' school was Rs 82-10 annas while each 'E' school cost Rs 53-10 annas, indicating clearly that the 'E' schools were cheaper than the 'D' schools.

The 'D' *patshalas*, however, (till its amalgamation with 'E' in 1876) taught a considerably higher standard than the 'E' *patshalas*. Many of the 'D' *patshalas* followed a course of studies similar to that of the middle vernacular schools and their pupils sat for the vernacular school scholarships.²⁷ Apart from reading, writing, and native arithmetic, regular use of books, European arithmetic and a little history and geography were invariably taught in the 'D' *patshalas*. In contrast, the 'E' *patshalas* subscribed to a much lower standard. The 'E' *patshalas* taught basically the old *patshala* course. The *gurus* were generally old fashioned men and taught pupils as before to write on palm leaves and do country arithmetic. The use of books was not compulsory but was to be introduced gradually and cautiously with the result that very few boys in these *patshalas* ever read any books. But occasionally, where a superior teacher taught in an 'E' *patshala*, a somewhat higher standard was adopted depending on the qualification and ability of the teacher. The number of such superior 'E' *patshalas* did not exceed 5 percent and the overwhelming majority of these schools were much more close to being genuine mass schools than the 'D' *patshalas*.²⁸

26. J. Sutcliffe, 'Note on Primary Education', 2 October, 1874, p. 1 in *Note on the History and Condition of the New Primary Patshalas*, Calcutta, 1873.

27. 'Memorandum from C. B. Clarke contrasting E and D *patshalas*', 20 July, 1874, p. 2, in *Note on the History and Condition of the New Primary Patshalas*, Calcutta, 1874.

28. *Ibid.*

Scholarships for primary pupils were instituted for the first time by Campbell's resolution. These scholarships were intended only for the very brilliant and remarkable pupils and care was to be taken to ensure that the mass of the boys did not harbour hopes of securing it as a way out of their present position. In order to check such tendencies, it was insisted that the subjects of examination for the primary scholarship would be confined to those subjects really sought by the mass of the people. These subjects were: Reading and writing the vernacular of the district; Arithmetic, written and mental; *Zamindari/Mahajani* accounts; and simple mensuration.²⁹

Campbell's scheme also provided for the setting up of normal schools for the training of *patshala* teachers. The grant for normal schools in 1872-83 was Rs 60,000 for four higher class and Rs 1,04,000 for 23 lower class schools. Campbell proposed to redistribute this fund and establish 9 first grade, 22 second grade, and 16 third grade schools, those of the two lower grades being exclusively devoted to the instruction of *patshala gurus*.³⁰ By 1875-76, 42 government normal schools were functioning all over Bengal.

Campbell administered the government of Bengal for 37 months (1871-74) and was succeeded by Richard Temple on 9 April, 1874. Campbell's *patshala* curriculum and provision of normal school training for *gurus* underwent modifications in the hands of his successor. Temple generally adhered to Campbell's policy of trying to extend elementary education to the poorest classes of the people. He was, therefore, in general, inclined to retain the simple curriculum set up by Campbell for the majority of the 'E' schools. But, at the same time, he felt that the time had also come to raise the standard of the curriculum of some at least of the primary schools and for the purpose proposed to enhance the standard of the primary scholarship.³¹ The new standard fixed for the primary scholarship examination was:³²

29. *Education Proceedings*, No. 115, November 1872.

30. *RPIB*, 1875-76, p. 96.

31. *Education Proceedings*, 14, File 2, May 1875.

32. *RPIB*, 1876-77, p. 23.

		Marks
I	— Handwriting	— 50
	Manuscript reading	— 50
	Reading and explanation of <i>Bodhoday</i>	— 100
II	— Arithmetic, the four rules, simple and compound	— 75
	Subhankari	— 75
III	— Bazar (Mahajani) accounts	— 50
	Zamindari accounts	— 50
	Simple mensuration	— 50
	Total	— 500

In order to pass, candidates would have to secure at least one-fourth of the marks in each group and two-fifths of the aggregate. Successful pupils were to be arranged in lists for each district and scholarships would be given to the highest candidates in these lists.

In contrast to the former standard, the new curriculum introduced two important changes: first, it made compulsory the ability to read and understand passages from a printed book, e. g. *Bodhoday* (a manual of useful knowledge); and second, European arithmetic was to be pursued side by side with the local Subhankari system (rules and formula for mental arithmetic on the native system).

Not only did Temple make changes in the scholarship standard but he also decided to gradually close the normal schools for *gurus*. Temple felt that the number of normal schools then being maintained was not really required since the *patshala* course was so simple that it could be easily taught without teachers having to undergo formal training. He argued that, at least in Bengal Proper, teachers for the primary schools could be supplied in abundance from the classes educated in the middle schools of the country and, hence, *guru* training schools could be gradually closed without injury to the

cause of elementary education.³³ Temple decreed that only those *gurus*, who belonged to *patshalas* before the introduction of government assistance and inspection, could be allowed to enter normal schools and care would be taken to ensure that all future appointments as *patshala* teachers would be handed out to only those candidates who had passed a higher standard.³⁴ This was an important departure from Campbell's principles. It implied that the old class of *gurus* would no longer be patronised, but rather they would be gradually replaced by teachers educated in the government-sponsored higher schools.

In accordance with the wishes of the Lieutenant-Governor, the number of normal schools were gradually reduced in subsequent years. From 1874 to 1876 the number of government normal school was 41; it fell to 31 in 1877, to 24 in 1878, to 17 in 1879 and by 1881-82 there were only eight normal schools for training superior vernacular and ten for training village teachers, including the *guru* departments of first grade schools.³⁵

In January 1879, the Government of India divided primary education into upper primary and lower primary categories.³⁶ The class of schools formerly designated 'lower vernacular', and classed under secondary schools, now became 'upper primary' schools and the former primary schools were now classed as 'lower primary'.³⁷ Indigenous *patshalas* outside departmental recognition and control except in the submission of an annual return, e.g. registered *patshalas*, were now to be classed under 'special instruction' and not as before under primary schools. Following these changes, the government of Bengal again modified the earlier primary scholarship standard set by Temple and a new subject, the reading and explanation of Cunningham's sanitary primer carrying 100 marks was added to the old syllabus.³⁸ Thus, by 1882, the simple *patshala* scholarship standard

33. *RPIB*, 1875-76, p. 96.

34. *Education Proceedings*, No. 103-12, File 9, September 1875.

35. *REC*, 1882, p. 131.

36. *Ibid.*, pp. 119-122.

37. *RPIB*, 1881-82, pp. 49-50.

38. *Ibid.*, p. 83.

set by Campbell gradually assumed a higher standard with the introduction of European arithmetic, use of printed books and the study of a sanitary primer. The primary scholarship standard is important, because the *patshalas* did not have any fixed uniform course and the most that the *gurus* could aspire to teach would be the scholarship standard. Hence, the raising of the primary scholarship standard would inevitably affect the teaching in the *patshalas*, more particularly those *patshalas* which hoped to gain scholarships.

So far, we have seen the various ways in which the government steadily strengthened its hold over the elementary education system. Let us now try to examine the extent to which the quality of education was raised by government involvement in the *patshalas*. There are two ways in which the qualitative progress of education can be tested : first, by calculating the number of pupils that passed the primary scholarship examination ; and second, by the number returned as being able to read a printed book.³⁹ Both tests have their limitations. The first test, although more reliable, was applicable only in the case of the topmost section of primary pupils and hence affected a relatively small proportion of the actual pupils. The second test, the ability to read a printed book, is difficult to accept satisfactorily as a unit for judging the qualitative progress of education. Rather, it more appropriately testifies to the government achievement in popularising the use of books. Moreover, the second test was also not fully reliable as the departmental returns were practically unchecked and not directly verifiable.⁴⁰ Nevertheless, in the absence of any more reliable yardstick, we have to depend on the above two tests to provide us with some indication of the progress achieved.

As noted earlier, by 1876 the primary scholarship standard had been considerably raised to include European arithmetic and a proper reading and understanding of a printed book, in addition to the old *patshala* course of writing, mental arithmetic, *zamindari*/

39. *Education Proceedings*, No. 9-12, File 70, November 1881.

40. *Ibid.*

mahajani accounts and mensuration. Any pupil passing the above standard could be rated as being fairly proficient by village standards and considered capable of meeting his day to day needs efficiently. The following table presents the gradual progress made between 1876-77 and 1881-82 towards the primary scholarship standard :

TABLE IV. 6 : SCHOOLS AND PUPILS REACHING
PRIMARY SCHOLARSHIP STANDARD BETWEEN
1876-77 TO 1881-82

Year	Total schools	Schools competing for scholarship	Total Pupils	Pupils competing for scholarship	Passed candidates
1876-77	13,966	3,110	360,513	11,462	5,246
1877-78	17,395	4,474	406,135	12,985	5,647
1878-79	24,354	6,053	489,518	16,910	7,965
1879-80	30,414	7,620	582,992	24,163	11,354
1880-81	37,501	7,887	671,723	26,293	13,951
1881-82	47,402	8,283	836,351	29,368	16,131

Source : *Report of Public Instruction in Bengal*, 1881-82, p. 81 and *Report of the Education Commission*, 1882, p. 103.

These figures reveal several important points. In 1876-77, out of 13,966 schools, 3,110 competed for the primary scholarship, implying that one school in every 4.4 had reached the primary scholarship standard. In 1881-82, out of 47,402 schools, 8,283 sent candidates for the primary scholarship, implying that one school in 5.7 had reached the scholarship standard. Thus, even though the number of competing schools had considerably increased by 1881-82, yet if we take into account the total increase of schools in the period, then it appears that in actual terms a smaller percentage of schools were competing for the scholarship in 1881-82 than in 1876-77. The

table also shows that each school on an average sent between three to four pupils every year for the examination (the only exception was in 1878-79 which averaged less than three pupils). In 1876-77, 11,462 pupils representing approximately 3.1 percent of total pupils competed for the primary scholarship. The corresponding figure for 1881-82 showed that 3.5 percent of total pupils sat for the scholarship exam. This meant that proportion of scholarship candidates had actually gone up in 1881-82 even after taking into consideration the increase in pupils in the intervening years. Again, in 1876-77, 5,246 candidates out of 11,462 passed, giving a success rate of 45.7 percent. In 1881-82, the percentage of passed candidates was 54.9 percent. Thus, both in terms of competing candidates and successful candidates, progress had been achieved although the number of schools participating in the scholarship examination had gone down.

Turning to the second test, in 1876-77, 225,000 pupils representing 65.5 percent of the total primary pupils were returned as being unable to read, write, and understand easy sentences in their mother-tongue.⁴¹ The corresponding figure in 1881-82 showed that 499,318 pupils or 60.6 percent of the total primary pupils still remained in that category.⁴² Some success had clearly been achieved in initiating the use of printed books.

The system of elementary education instituted by Campbell was, like his predecessors, based mainly on Bengal's existing network of indigenous schools. New schools were also set up but these were confined mainly to those areas where indigenous schools did not exist. Even the new schools set up were modelled after the old *patshalas*. Campbell was anxious to secure the attendance of the masses to the government patronized *patshalas* and he diagnosed that the best way to do so would be to retain the nature of the instructions given in the *patshalas*. In other words, the *patshala* was to continue to function basically as a centre for the acquisition of practical skills rather than acquisition of abstract knowledge. He was, therefore,

41. *RPIB*, 1876-77, p. 4.

42. *RPIB*, 1881-82, p. 7.

opposed to the conversion of *patshalas* into schools of the previous Departmental model. Instead, to retain its mass character, he decreed that any rapid improvement of the *patshala* standard was to be avoided and the old *patshala* course strictly followed. The improvement of the *patshala* was to come mainly through the gradual introduction of printed books. The motive to improvement was supplied by the stimulus of competitive examination earning rewards, by regular inspections, and by the award of scholarships.⁴³

The simple standard set by Campbell did not operate for long and underwent modifications in the hands of his successor Richard Temple. Temple raised the primary scholarship standard, emphasising greater force on the use of printed books and he also decreed the gradual closure of normal schools and substitution of the old *gurus* by younger, better educated teachers. This was a crucial development. In the past, better educated teachers had always tended to teach what they had learned in the way they thought best, which inevitably resulted in considerable raising of the standard. The plan to patronize younger better qualified teachers instead of the old *gurus* practically amounted to a reversal of the policy set up by Campbell. Its indirect effect, in the long run, would be to raise the standard of the *patshalas*, converting them into schools on the Departmental model.

A major objective of Campbell's policy was to achieve rapid expansion of government control over elementary education. The adherence to the traditional *patshala* subjects and the limited improvement induced were merely means towards the achievement of that end. It was a ploy devised to bring *patshalas* under government control, for Campbell realized that if the level of instruction was not changed, then the *patshalas* would be more amenable to submit to government influence. Thus, although not in favour of rapidly elevating *patshala* standards, yet Campbell did not relax on the mechanisms of control adopted earlier, e.g., inspection, submission of returns, and general fulfilment of conditions for

43. REC, 1882, p. 104.

eligibility of grant. Rather, he devised new forms of strengthening control in instituting examinations, scholarships, and payment by results, to be conducted on the directions of the Education Department.

The period 1872 to 1882 is to be noted for the remarkable expansion of government control achieved in elementary education. Campbell's liberal funding program had provided a great impetus in this direction. Further, the adoption of payment by results helped to make a little money go a long way and by 1881-82, the number of pupils had jumped to 836,351 from 68,044 in 1870-71. More than a twelve fold increase in enrolled pupils had resulted in a decade's time.

The General Council of Education in India, in a petition to the Governor General (1881) observed that :

"the department for primary education in India had been carried on so feebly that it had not kept pace with the natural increase in population, and that notwithstanding what has been done during the last twenty-seven years, we are further from undertaking the education of the masses of the people than when we began, for while we did not add 50,000 a year to our schools, the birth-rate added nearly 200,000 children of school age to the population of the country so that in 1881 there were more millions of uneducated children than in 1854, the year of the great Educational Despatch."⁴⁴

If we apply the same test in Bengal, we find that in 1872 Bengal had a population of 60,165,084 of which 205,934 (see Table VI. 1) were in primary schools giving a ratio of 0.34 primary pupils to population. In 1881-82, Bengal had a total of 836,351 primary pupils and a population of 66,750,494 which gives a ratio of 1.25 primary school pupils to population.⁴⁵ In other words, the figures testify that

44. Quoted in H. Stark, 'Vernacular Education in Bengal' *Calcutta Review*, No. 285, 1916, pp. 241-242.

45. Bengal population figures have been taken from H. H. Risley and E. A. Gait, *Census of India*, 1901, Volume I-A, Part II: Tables, Calcutta, 1903, p. 6.

Bengal witnessed real expansion in this period. Even after considering population increases, the number of pupils in Bengal trebled in this decade. Campbell's policy of promoting mass education and extending government control over elementary education had clearly succeeded.

CHAPTER V

CONSOLIDATING GOVERNMENT CONTROL OF PATSHALAS : 1883 TO 1899

The policy adopted by Sir George Campbell in 1872 had resulted in considerable extension of government control over *patshalas*. Also, many new *patshalas* had been set up in the period by the people in the hope of securing government aid. The new *patshalas* had generally been set up in those areas where *patshalas* did not exist. As a result of Campbell's policies, the number of *patshalas* and pupils recognized by the government had increased from 2,486 *patshalas* with 68,044 pupils in 1870-71 to 47,402 *patshalas* with 836,351 pupils in 1881-82. All these *patshalas* as a condition for getting government aid, had to conform to regulations stipulated by the Education Department. These *patshalas* had to submit to official supervision and taught according to the syllabus prescribed by the Department. The amount of grant to be sanctioned to any school was made dependent on the outcome of an examination to be conducted by the Department. The *guru's* earnings were now to be determined clearly by the degree to which he had taught the government course efficiently.

The drive for extension of elementary education launched in the 1870's was, however, abandoned in the 1880's. In the period, 1883 to 1899, consolidation rather than extension became the keynote of government policy. Within the framework of consolidation, government control was further strengthened over existing government recognized *patshalas*. Changes were now introduced aimed at improving the quality of education hitherto given in the *patshalas* and attempts were made to weed out small, inefficient, *patshalas* from the list of aided *patshalas*. This chapter will examine

the policy of consolidation carried out by the Bengal government between 1883 and 1899. An attempt will be made to see how the policy was applied to different regions and the impact that it had in changing the traditional *patshala*.

The Government of India had, in January 1879, divided primary education into upper primary and lower primary categories. As such, it ought to be noted at the outset that this chapter deals with the development of lower primary education only. Under departmental orders, lower primaries were now classified as those *patshalas* which adopted departmental standards or which sent pupils to central examinations.¹ Upper primary schools were previously known as lower vernacular schools and classed under secondary education. These schools (upper primary) really catered to a much higher standard than that of the lower primary and are beyond the scope of this study.

A. Weeding Out *Patshalas*

In 1882, the Government of India appointed an Education Commission to review fully the development of education since the Despatch of 1854. The Commission was directed to give special attention to primary education. The Commission conducted a detailed enquiry into the condition of Indian education. It studied seven preliminary reports submitted by Provincial Committees representing the territorial divisions of India ; examined a total of 193 witnesses (of which 31 were from Bengal); and received 323 memorials (of which 13 were from Bengal) before finally preparing its report. ² The Commission generally approved of the policy laid down by the despatch of 1854; and its recommendations aimed at a more complete fulfilment of that policy.³

Regarding the policy of government towards primary education, the Commission urged that 'the strenuous efforts of the State should

1. *RPIB*, 1881-82, p. 50.

2. *REC*, 1882, pp. 5, 6, 7, 629, 630.

3. *Interim Report of the Indian Statutory Commission*, Government of India Press, Delhi, 1929, pp. 13-14.

now be directed in a still larger measure than before towards the provision, extension and improvement of the elementary education of the masses.⁴ It proposed that the control of primary education should be handed over to District and Municipal Boards and urged that all indigenous schools, whether high or low, should be recognized and encouraged. The Commission suggested that attempts should be made to improve the teaching in indigenous schools and that *gurus* should be encouraged to submit to regular training. To provide for stricter inspection and control, it was urged that schools seeking aid ought to be inspected *in situ* and that examinations for grant-in-aid should be conducted *in situ* as well. The Commission recommended that the system of payment by results be given preference in distributing grants and urged the introduction of practical subjects (such as the elements of natural science and their application to agriculture) in the primary course.⁵ Overall, the Commission's Report clearly stressed the need to continue extension of government control over indigenous schools and, at the same time, urged the gradual raising of the standard of elementary education.

As noted in the earlier chapter, the measures of Sir George Campbell had resulted in steady expansion of government control over elementary education. In that period, 1872-1882, by the offer of rewards, even the most humble indigenous schools were gradually induced to submit to Departmental regulations. However, this policy was shelved in 1883-84. The policy of systematic expansion of control pursued vigorously for so long, was no longer considered relevant. It was now held that the number of schools and scholars under the Department's control was too large to allow effective supervision by existing staff. And, since available funding was insufficient to allow any rapid expansion (i. e., fresh recruitment) of staff, a change of strategy was thought to be expedient. The Lt-Governor, in the Resolution on the department report for 1882-83 observed :

4. REC, pp. 586-587.

5. See Chapter V, Appendix A and Chapter V, Appendix B for full details of the recommendations of the Commission regarding Indigenous and Primary education.

"it was not his wish to discourage the establishment of new schools in districts where their number was still small in comparison with the extent of country and population ; but there could be no doubt that in many districts the development of the system of primary education had already reached, if in some it had not actually exceeded, the limit compatible with sound administration; and it was desirable that in these districts there should be no further extension for some years. The consolidation and improvement of existing schools should now be the main object of local officers, and the search for old indigenous schools should be generally abandoned." ⁶

The blunt assertion of government policy in favour of improvement was clearly against the spirit of the Education Commission Report (1882) which had urged equally the need for extension of control as well as improvement. However, right through to the end of the century, the policy of giving priority to consolidation and improvement over expansion was carried out systematically in Bengal. The Education Department no longer attempted to induce small *patshalas* to come under its fold. Rather, it now embarked on a policy of deliberately weeding out these institutes from the Department's lists.

The change of policy necessitated the adoption of new measures. New conditions were now laid down for the sanction of grants. It was decided that no grants would be given to a school in which a printed book of some kind was not read and that all schools seeking a reward must have existed for at least six months, must contain a minimum of ten boys and must have properly maintained attendance and inspection registers.⁷ The Education Department felt that a fulfilment of the above conditions would render these indigenous schools more stable and at the same time provide an inducement to adopt a printed primer.⁸

6. *RPIB*, 1883-84, p. 63.

7. *Ibid.*, p. 74.

8. *Review of Education in India*, 1886, p. 63

TABLE V. 1: SCHOOLS AND PUPILS BETWEEN
1882-83 AND 1988-99

Year	Schools	Pupils
1882-83	60,337	1,016,482
1883-84	61,252	1,072,904
1884-85	62,860	1,121,865
1885-86	47,623	986,160
1886-87	45,337	965,214
1887-88	45,505	991,099
1888-89	44,854	982,126
1889-90	44,145	960,865
1890-91	43,997	942,211
1891-92	44,918	987,948
1892-93	43,828	983,204
1893-94	44,020	988,745
1894-95	45,897	1,055,253
1895-96	47,054	1,087,356
1896-97	45,612	1,081,432
1897-98	43,482	1,036,635
1898-99	44,080	1,064,477

Source : Compiled from the *Reports of Public Instruction in Bengal*,
1882-83 to 1898-99.

As was to be expected, the enforcement of the above measures adversely affected the expansion drive of the previous decade. Table V. 1, on the previous page, will illustrate the point.

The effects of the weeding-out policy clearly surface from 1885-86 when the number of schools fell to 47, 623 from 62,860 of the previous year and the number of pupils to 986,160 from 1,121,865. Overall, taking the entire period, there was a definite reduction in the number of schools but pupil enrolment in 1898-99 was about the numbers returned in 1883-84. This meant that the actual number of pupils to a school had increased although there was no real expansion of pupils. In 1884-85 there were roughly 17·8 pupils to every school whereas by 1898-99 there were 24·1 scholars to a school. From the Department's point of view, large schools implied stability and the elimination of the weak schools from Departmental returns was viewed, therefore, with favour as a healthy process to be encouraged rather than condemned.⁹

The question now arises : what happened to those schools which were weeded out by the Department ? Were these schools completely wiped out or did they continue to exist even without Departmental grants ? No straightforward answer can be provided to the above questions. The only way to get at the questions is to analyse the position of private institutions in this period. Private institutions included *patshalas* and *maktabs* which did not conform to Departmental standards. The existence of these institutes were known to the Department, but they were as yet unaided by the Department. It may be noted here, that there would still be existing many *patshalas* in small remote villages which were not classed as private institutions as the Department was not aware of their existence. Table V. 2, on the following page, enumerates the position of private institutes between 1882-83 and 1898-99.

It is clear from the said table that an indirect effect of the policy of weeding inferior schools had been to add considerably to the number of private institutions. This tends to imply that

TABLE V. 2 : PUPILS IN PRIVATE INSTITUTES
BETWEEN 1882-83 AND 1898-99

Year	Schools	Pupils
1882-83	4,386	56,039
1883-84	4,359	54,531
1884-85	2,512	27,339
1885-86	2,234	29,749
1886-87	4,221	45,508
1887-88	10,048	96,721
1888-89	11,709	117,284
1889-90	13,867	139,603
1890-91	13,387	132,057
1891-92	13,868	139,594
1892-93	13,473	134,989
1893-94	13,602	135,530
1894-95	13,941	140,360
1895-96	13,744	130,192
1896-97	12,207	126,182
1897-98	11,413	119,923
1898-99	11,073	122,542

Source : Compiled from the *Reports of Public Instruction in Bengal*,
188.-83 to 1898-99.

many of the schools weeded out did not actually cease to exist but rather joined the ranks of private institutes and swelled their numbers. These schools continued to exist in the shadow of the Department ; they submitted returns to the Department, and were no doubt hopeful of being eventually taken back into the fold of the Department. The actual increase, both in the number of schools and scholars, began in 1887-88 when the numbers jumped from 4,221 schools with 45,508 pupils in 1886-87 to 10,048 schools and 96,721 pupils. This sharp rise was largely due to a relaxation of Departmental rules allowing inclusion in the returns of small unaided indigenous schools containing even less than ten pupils.¹⁰ Between 1885-86 (the year the effect of the weeding-out policy became evident, See Table V. 1) and 1898-99, the number of private institutes and scholars rose from 2,234 schools with 29,749 pupils to 11,078 schools and 122,542 scholars, more than a four fold increase. It is not possible to assess accurately what number of the weeded-out *patshalas* surfaced later as private institutions. However, although there is no positive proof, the evidence does suggest that many of the rejected *patshalas* did join private ranks. This is indicated by the fact that a decrease in the number of aided schools was accompanied by an increase in the number of unaided schools (see Tables V. 1. and V. 2).

For the pupils of the weeded out *patshalas*, there were a number of options ; they could have stopped their education following closure of their school or joined some other small unrecognized *patshala* ; they could have continued in the same school, now operating as a private institute : or they could have moved out to a neighbouring aided *patshala*. There can be no doubt that many took the last option of joining aided schools and thereby accounting for the increase in the number of pupils to aided schools from 17·8 in 1884-85 to 24·1 in 1898-99 (population increases in the intervening 15 years must also have influenced the increase in enrolment to school ratio).

10, *RP/B*, 1887-88, p. 1.

The weeding-out campaign launched by the Department was not carried out uniformly all over Bengal. Rather, different divisions were affected differently. It may be recalled here that Campbell's program of extending government control of elementary education had witnessed uneven progress in the different regions of Bengal. Under Campbell's scheme many new *patshalas* were erected in those districts where indigenous schools were scarce. Also, Campbell had directed that even the most humble *patshalas* ought not to be neglected and that efforts should be made to bring even these schools under Departmental influence. As such, some regions benefitted more from this relaxed policy than others. Tables V. 3 and V. 4 on the following pages, will now trace, first, the pattern of progress achieved in the decade 1874-75 to 1884-85 and then go on to show how the weeding-out process affected the different regions of Bengal down to 1898-99.

Table V. 3 shows that the Eastern Bengal divisions of Dhaka and Chittagong had benefitted most from the extension drive generated by Campbell. None of the other divisions could match the growth rate achieved by Dhaka and Chittagong, both in terms of extension of schools as well as pupils. Let us now see how the government's weeding out policy affected the different divisions.

Since the effects of the government's weeding-out policy first became apparent in 1885-86, we have taken the two years 1885-86 and 1898-99 to give us an indication of the shape it took over this entire period. Unlike the changes in Table V. 3, Table V. 4 does not show a uniform pattern of all divisions registering an increase in both schools and scholars. The picture here is more complicated with some divisions showing increases and others decreases in both the number of schools and scholars. However, what does stand out significantly is that the two Eastern Bengal divisions of Dhaka and Chittagong are the only ones to have shown a fall in both schools and scholars. In fact, while Dhaka and Chittagong divisions were losing schools and pupils, Burdwan and Rajshahi divisions registered a marginal increase in both categories and the presidency division, although showing a decrease in the number

of schools, had actually more pupils enrolled than before. One can clearly see the correlation between Tables V. 3 and V. 4. The divisions of Dhaka and Chittagong, which had benefitted greatly between 1874-75 and 1884-85, were the ones to be most seriously affected by the government's weeding-out policy. Not only was there a reduction in the number of schools in these divisions, but also the number of scholars, instead of increasing, showed a decline. The gains which these divisions had made in the earlier period were all but lost as the government changed its policy in favour of consolidation rather than extension.

Another interesting point evident in the table is that the number of pupils to a school increased in all divisions. Thus, in the Presidency division, enrolled pupils increased despite a decline in school numbers; in Burdwan and Rajshahi, the percentage of pupil increase was much higher than the increase of schools; and in Dhaka and Chittagong, the proportion of schools being wiped off Departmental lists was considerably higher than the drop of pupil enrolment. This tends to support our earlier observation, that an important effect of the weeding-out policy was to increase the size of the school.

Table V. 4 has given a picture of the increase/decrease of schools and pupils in the different divisions. But this picture does not really tell us the extent of progress made in these divisions. In order to actually do so, one has to measure increase/decrease in relation to population growth. Only then will the figures become more meaningful. Table V. 5 now gives the relative position of different divisions with regard to boys at school in primary stage compared to population of boys of school-going age.

TABLE V. 5 : DIVISIONAL DISTRIBUTION OF
PROPORTION OF BOYS OF SCHOOL-GOING AGE
IN PRIMARY STAGE OF SCHOOL

	Of the boys of school-going age :	
	1882-83	1898-99
Burdwan	1 in 2.3 was at school	1 in 1.9 was at school
Presidency	1 in 3.8 " " "	1 in 3.1 " " "

	Of the boys of school-going age :	
	1882-83	1898-99
Rajshahi	1 in 7.8 was at school	1 in 5.6 was at school
Dhaka	1 in 3.2 „ „ „	1 in 3.6 „ „ „
Chittagong*	1 in 1.5 „ „ „	1 in 2.9 „ „ „

* Excludes Hill Tracts

Source : Compiled from the *Reports of Public Instruction in Bengal*, 1882-83 and 1898-99.

While Burdwan, Presidency, and Rajshahi divisions showed improved performance over the period, Dhaka and Chittagong were the only divisions unable to maintain progress vis-à-vis population growth. Thus, in real terms, these divisions had fewer pupils enrolled in 1898-99 than in 1882-83. In 1882-83 Chittagong was the leading division recording 1 in 1.5 of the boys of school-age at school. This was possible because the liberal policy then practised towards elementary education allowed even the small *patshalas* to be recognized and included in the Departmental returns. However, the implementation of the weeding-out policy soon changed the situation, hitting hard Chittagong and Dhaka divisions. As a result both these divisions failed to hold their position. The table also shows that the Rajshahi division, representing Northern Bengal, was the most backward region having a lesser proportion of pupils at school than the other divisions.

Table V. 6 now further breaks up the divisional statistics to allow a closer look at the district level (see following page).

A wide degree of variation existed between different districts of Bengal demonstrating that the progress of education was not uniform. The table also points out that all the districts of Eastern Bengal were not equally hard hit by the weeding-out policy. In fact, Barisal and Faridpur, both belonging to the Dhaka division, were able to record a modest improvement. In 1882-83, the two leading districts returning the best ratio of pupils to population were Comilla and Noakhali of the Chittagong division but by 1898-99 their position

TABLE V. 3 : INCREASE / DECREASE OF SCHOOLS AND PUPILS BETWEEN 1874-75 AND 1884-85 IN DIFFERENT DIVISIONS OF BENGAL

Divisions	Schools		% of increase (+) or decrease (-) in the period	Pupils		% of increase (+) or decrease (-) in the period
	1874-75	1884-85		1874-75	1884-85	
Presidency (includes Calcutta,	2,628	4,248	+ 61.6	79,509	1,22,045	+ 53.4
Burdwan	3,389	9,432	+178.3	80,507	1,99,613	+147.9
Rajshahi	1,853	3,112	+ 67.9	43,515	72,219	+ 65.9
Dhaka	1,167	11,225	+861.8	34,947	2,21,187	+532.9
Chittagong	556	4,949	+790.1	18,522	1,16,488	+528.9

Source : Compiled from the *Reports of Public Instruction in Bengal, 1874-75 and 1884-85.*

TABLE V. 4 : INCREASE / DECREASE OF SCHOOLS AND PUPILS BETWEEN 1885-86 AND 1898-99 IN DIFFERENT DIVISIONS OF BENGAL

Divisions	Schools		% of increase (+) or decrease (-) in the period	Pupils		% of increase (+) or decrease (-) in the period
	1885-86	1898-99		1885-86	1898-99	
Presidency (includes Calcutta)	4,284	4,001	- 6.6	1,20,692	1,32,487	+ 9.7
Burdwan	8,800	9,136	+ 3.8	1,99,384	2,32,282	+ 16.4
Rajshahi	2,901	3,105	+ 7.0	63,806	81,557	+ 27.8
Dhaka	8,371	6,391	- 23.6	1,71,899	1,46,832	- 14.5
Chittagong	4,415	2,851	- 35.4	1,03,825	77,066	- 25.7

Source : Compiled from the *Reports of Public Instruction in Bengal*, 1885-86 and 1898-99.

TABLE V. 6 : DISTRICT WISE DISTRIBUTION OF
PROPORTION OF BOYS OF SCHOOL-GOING
AGE IN PRIMARY STAGE OF SCHOOL

District	Of the boys of school-going age :		
	1882-83	1898-99	
Burdwan	1 in 2.1 was at school	1 in 2.3 was at school	
Birbhum	1 in 3.6 " " "	1 in 2.4 " " "	
Bankura	1 in 2.5 " " "	1 in 2.1 " " "	
Midnapur	1 in 2.2 " " "	1 in 1.6 " " "	
Hooghly	1 in 1.9 " " "	1 in 1.9 " " "	
Howrah	1 in 2.2 " " "	1 in 2.0 " " "	
(Burdwan Division)	1 in 2.3 " " "	1 in 1.9 " " "	
24-Pargana	1 in 1.9 " " "	1 in 2.2 " " "	
Nadia	1 in 6.4 " " "	1 in 4.4 " " "	
Murshidabad	1 in 6.1 " " "	1 in 3.8 " " "	
Jessore	1 in 4.3 " " "	1 in 4.4 " " "	
Khulna	1 in 3.9 " " "	1 in 3.1 " " "	
(Presidency Division)	1 in 3.8 " " "	1 in 3.1 " " "	
(Calcutta)	Not available	1 in 2.7 " " "	
Rajshahi	1 in 6.0 " " "	1 in 6.1 " " "	
Dinajpur	1 in 8.0 " " "	1 in 5.8 " " "	
Jalpaiguri	1 in 9.5 " " "	1 in 5.1 " " "	
Darjeeling	1 in 9.0 " " "	1 in 6.5 " " "	
Rangpur	1 in 9.4 " " "	1 in 6.0 " " "	
Bogra	1 in 8.4 " " "	1 in 4.6 " " "	
Pabna	1 in 6.9 " " "	1 in 5.2 " " "	
(Rajshahi Division)	1 in 7.8 " " "	1 in 5.6 " " "	
Dhaka	1 in 2.6 " " "	1 in 3.6 " " "	
Mymensingh	1 in 4.0 " " "	1 in 5.2 " " "	
Faridpur	1 in 4.1 " " "	1 in 3.8 " " "	
Barisal	1 in 2.5 " " "	1 in 2.2 " " "	
(Dhaka Division)	1 in 3.2 " " "	1 in 3.6 " " "	
Comilla (Tippera)	1 in 1.3 " " "	1 in 2.8 " " "	
Noakhali	1 in 1.4 " " "	1 in 3.1 " " "	
Chittagong	1 in 2.2 " " "	1 in 2.8 " " "	
(Chittagong Division)	1 in 1.5 " " "	1 in 2.9 " " "	

Source : Compiled from the *Reports of Public Instruction in Bengal*,
1882-83 and 1898-99.

had considerably eroded on account of the impact of the weeding policy. Throughout the period, most of the Northern Bengal districts continued to record the least number of boys in school to population. This would imply that the Northern Bengal region was educationally more backward than either Western or Eastern Bengal. Overall, the table highlights with great force the fact that some districts were educationally much more advanced than others. This was true, not only for districts belonging to different divisions, but also for districts within the same division.

Table V. 7, on the following page, will now furnish a classification of lower primary schools for boys (division wise) based on numerical strength. This will enable us to see which divisions had large schools and which had small ones.

1886-87 is the first year for which the Department provided statistics of the numerical strength of schools. Since figures for the earlier years are unavailable, the starting point could not be taken to coincide with the setting in of the weeding-out policy. Nevertheless, the table is useful as it underlines some interesting points. The division of Chittagong was generally believed by the Education Department as having a large number of weak schools with very small enrolment.¹¹ But this supposition does not appear to hold from the table. In 1886-87, Dhaka, Burdwan, and Rajshahi all had more schools in the "less than 20 pupil" category than Chittagong. In fact, by 1898-99 Chittagong was second only to the Presidency division in recording the maximum number of schools in the 40 pupils and above category. If the size of a school is taken to be the yardstick of stability, then Chittagong could well lay claim to being a leading division in that respect. Perhaps the weeding-out policy had pushed Chittagong into developing large schools. The table also gives indications of the overall impact of the weeding policy as is evidenced from the fact that strong schools generally advanced in this period while weak schools declined in number.

The government's weeding-out policy had over the period 1883-84 to 1889-99 achieved reasonable success. It succeeded in keeping

11. *RPIB*, 1883-84, p. 67.

TABLE V. 7 : DIVISIONAL DISTRIBUTION OF THE SIZE OF SCHOOLS BASED ON
NUMERICAL STRENGTH 1886-87

Divisions	Total number of schools	Schools with 40 pupils and more	% of total number of schools	Schools with 20 pupils but less than 40	% of total number of schools	Schools with 10 pupils and less than 20	% of total number of schools
Presidency (including Calcutta)	4,610	882	19.1	2,397	51.9	1,331	28.8
Burdwan	9,332	814	8.7	3,942	42.2	4,576	49.0
Rajshahi	2,766	114	4.1	1,574	56.9	1,278	46.2
Dhaka	5,968	512	8.5	2,501	41.9	2,955	49.5
Chittagong*	4,610	364	7.8	2,337	50.6	1,865	40.4
1898-99							
Presidency (including Calcutta)	4,001	1,139	28.4	2,221	55.5	641	16.0
Burdwan	9,136	1,065	11.6	4,644	50.8	3,427	37.5
Rajshahi	3,105	314	10.1	1,997	64.3	794	25.5
Dhaka	6,391	473	7.4	3,138	49.1	2,780	43.4
Chittagong	2,851	386	13.5	1,665	58.4	800	28.0

* Chittagong also returned 44 schools having less than 10 pupils.

Source : Compiled from the *Reports of Public Instruction in Bengal*, 1886-87 and 1898-99.

pupil enrolment to the 1883-84 level. It eliminated weak schools from the Departmental's list and gave a boost to the development of large schools. This policy was carried out all over Bengal but its impact varied, with some divisions being clearly more hard hit than others.

B. Raising the *Patshala* Standard

(i) *The Problem of Finance*

District Boards in Bengal were constituted by the Bengal Local Self-Government Act III of 1885 and made responsible for the maintenance and management of primary schools within the district. The other educational functions delegated to District Boards included the administration of the primary grant, the conduct of the annual examinations of primary schools for rewards, and the award of lower primary scholarships.¹² The District Boards tackled educational work in three different ways: some districts appointed educational sub-committees whose proceedings were afterwards confirmed by the Boards; some districts transferred educational duties together with the necessary funds to Local Boards; and some other districts adopted a combination of both systems.¹³ Initially the District Boards had to face a lot of criticism. Deputy Inspectors of some districts complained that their recommendations were neglected by the District Boards, some complained that a part of the primary allotment remained unspent and many felt that the District Boards could not devote adequate time and attention to educational business.¹⁴ However, with the passage of time, the District Boards gained in experience, and the grievances noted above gradually disappeared.

The original grants made to the District Boards were fixed with reference to the actual expenditure incurred by the government in 1885-86 and two expanding sources of revenue, namely *pounds* and a portion (in some districts the whole) of the *ferries*, were made

12. *RPIB*, 1889-90, pp. 17-18.

13. *RPIB*, 1888-89, p. 11.

14. *Ibid.*, pp. 12-13.

TABLE V. 8 : FUNDING AND PRIMARY EDUCATION,
1885-86 AND 1898-99

Division	Allotment (Rs.)	Schools	Pupils	Cost per school in Rs	Cost per pupil in annas
<i>Primary Grant for 1884-85</i>					
Presidency (with Calcutta)	96,000	5,149	150,209	18.6	10.2
Burdwan	126,000	10,202	224,928	12.3	8.9
Rajshahi	76,000	3,561	84,247	21.3	14.4
Dhaka	100,000	12,538	246,948	7.9	6.4
Chittagong	70,000	5,247	123,716	13.3	9.0
Total	4,68,000	36,697	8,30,048	12.7	9.0
<i>Primary Grant for 1898-99</i>					
Presidency (with Calcutta)	1,47,613	4,384	1,50,399	33.6	15.7
Burdwan	1,73,405	8,257	2,29,506	21.0	12.0
Rajshahi	1,43,043	3,221	90,458	44.4	25.3
Dhaka	1,23,410	4,445	1,22,667	27.7	16.0
Chittagong	1,32,339	2,773	82,201	47.7	25.7
Total	7,19,810	23,080	6,75,231	31.1	17.0

Source : Compiled from *Reports of Public Instruction in Bengal*,
1884-85 and 1898-99.

over to them, a government grant being added if the income from these sources was not sufficient to balance the account.¹⁵ What now happened was that income in some districts could not keep up with increased educational demands and the educational activities of the Boards in such districts were severely restricted for lack of funds. Thus, in these districts, the weeding-out campaign was dictated not only by the desire to consolidate but also because of insufficient finance. Again, the finances of some District Boards were strong enough to enable them to meet all increased expenditure from their district funds. In consideration of these circumstances, the Lt-Governor in 1894-95, determined that savings made in the departmental allotments for primary schools were to be placed at the disposal of the Director of Public Instruction for distribution to those districts in which the primary allotment was too low.¹⁶

Table V. 8, on the previous page, will now attempt to show how availability of funds affected primary education in different divisions. The Reports of the Director of Public Instruction indicated that the primary grant was to be administered for both upper primary and lower primary schools but it did not specify the proportion in which the money was to be divided. As such, for the sake of clarity, I have included figures for both upper and lower primary schools/pupils when relating to primary grant. The inclusion of upper primary figures does, no doubt, make a difference, but even then, it will be a useful exercise as it will provide an indication of what was involved.

The table shows that the primary grant varied considerably between different divisions with some benefitting more than others. It is clear that the number of schools/pupils were not taken into account in fixing the distribution of the grant. The Departmental explanation was that grants for each division were determined not only by the number of primary schools and pupils but also by the progress they have made and the material condition of the people.¹⁷

15. *RPIB*, 1889-90, p. 18.

16. *Review of Education in Bengal*, 1892-93 to 1896-97, p. 72.

17. *RPIB*, 1883-84, p. 65.

As a result of the uneven distribution of grants, the average cost of schools and pupils also varied between different divisions. The schools of the Burdwan and Dhaka divisions were much cheaper to maintain than those of the other divisions. Between 1884-85 and 1898-99 the primary grant had nearly doubled. But the increased grant was not used to bring more schools under government control. Rather, in line with the policy of consolidation, the money was spent in maintaining even fewer schools than before (reduced as an impact of the weeding-out campaign). This effectively meant that by 1898-99, in every division of Bengal, the government was pumping in more money to fewer schools as part of its overall strategy of consolidation and improvement. As a result, the cost ratio of schools and pupils also rose considerably in every division.

The Bengal Municipal Act III of 1884 laid out that Municipal Commissioners could apply municipal funds for the establishment and maintenance of schools in their jurisdiction.¹⁸ However, in the absence of any fixed provision being spelled out, municipal contributions amounted to very little. The municipal contributions to primary schools in 1892-93 was only Rs 32, 916. But even this small amount was then considered by the Education Department to be satisfactory and taken as a sign of the Municipalities becoming more alive to the educational needs of the poor.¹⁹ Although considered satisfactory, the government at the same time was also straining and urging for even greater contributions from the municipalities. In order to increase the financial responsibilities of the municipalities, the government declared in 1892-93, that henceforth municipalities were expected to provide at the rate of 10 annas a head for the education of half the male children of school-going age, or 3.2 percent of its total income.²⁰ The government decision was no doubt prompted by the fact that government money was more required for furthering the cause of primary education in places other than in municipalities, which were naturally the more advanced

18. *Review of Education in India*, 1886, p. 25.

19. *RPIB*, 1892-93, Resolution No. 2569, p. 7.

20. *Ibid.*

areas.²¹ Most municipalities, however, were apparently not convinced of the government's views and did not extend the required co-operation. By the end of the century, 1899-1900, the municipal expenditure on primary schools was only Rs 59,695. Although municipal expenditure had increased, it nevertheless fell far short of reaching the desired limit of spending 3.2 percent of its total income.²²

The above discussion shows that the lack of adequate finance could not be singled out as the sole inhibiting factor deterring the growth of primary education. A crucial corollary of funding, in this regard, was the will to expand and this, the government clearly lacked. It had deliberately opted for improvement and consolidation and we shall now attempt to see what success was achieved on that count.

(ii) *Strengthening Use of Printed Books and Syllabus Changes*

In 1883-84, the Bengal government had asserted that in future no grant would be given to a school in which a printed book was not read.²³ The desire to introduce printed books had always been there but never had it been made obligatory in aided schools. In the past, the policy had been to encourage the use of printed primers cautiously and voluntarily. But now, in the eyes of the department, the social situation had changed necessitating a change of strategy as well. The department argued that the advantage to the ryot, the artisan or the petty trader of being able to read and understand the meaning of a printed notice was so obvious at the time (and would no doubt assume even greater importance in the near future) that the introduction of that form of learning ought rightly to be introduced into every school receiving public money.²⁴ Clearly, the government, in stressing the use of printed books, was motivated by its own deeper interest of being able to communicate its ideas and plans to the people through the obvious medium of

21. *Education Proceedings*, No. 7-11, File 3 p-2, October 1897.

22. *RPIB*, 1899-1900, pp. 76-77.

23. *RPIB*, 1883-84, p. 74.

24. *Review of Education in India*, 1886, p. 63.

printed notices. The use of printed books, therefore, assumed new importance as a unit of standardization'. The government also held that the multiplication of railways, post offices and other agencies for the development of governmental machinery created a situation where the maintenance of *patshalas* on their old basis became untenable.²⁵ As such, the Department decided that the time was now appropriate for making the use of printed books obligatory in aided schools.

The change in government policy, however, was not accompanied by any major change in the lower primary scholarship standard. That standard had been last set in 1879 and included reading and explanation of *Bodhoday* (a vernacular adaptation of Chamber's *Rudiments of Knowledge*); handwriting and manuscript reading; arithmetic on the European method up to compound divisions; Subhankari (rules and formulae for mental arithmetic on native system), *zamindari* and *mahajani* accounts; and the reading and explanation of Cunningham's sanitary primer (see chapter IV for details). No real change was made on this syllabus. Only Cunningham's sanitary primer was dropped from the course as the department received complaints that it was too abstruse and difficult for lower primary students.²⁶ It was replaced by '*Saral Sarir Palan*', or easy treatise on the preservation of health. The *Saral Sarir Palan* contained a number of homely rules and illustrations, based on the ordinary circumstances of village life in Bengal, and it was expected that the teaching of elementary sanitary rules would eventually produce some beneficial effect.²⁷

The above syllabus continued unchanged to 1894-95, when the *Bodhoday* was dropped and replaced by *Nutanpath*. It was now held by the department that *Bodhoday*, having been written about fifty years back, was lacking in modern requirements and a more practical Reader was needed.²⁸ *Nutanpath* was chosen to fill this require-

25. RPIB, 1884-85, para 133 (page number is not readable).

26. RPIB, 1883-84 p. 70,

27. *Ibid.*

28. RPIB, 1894-95, p. 65.

ment. Unlike *Bodhoday*, a large section of *Nutanpath* was devoted to agricultural topics.²⁹ The choice of *Nutanpath* was, therefore, significant because it showed that the bias of the government was changing from literary to practical.

This course of study was again revised in 1897. It was now held that the pretentious names of *zamindari* accounts and mensuration of lines and plane surfaces ought to be eliminated from the course of the lower primary standard as both were covered under Subhankari.³⁰ The rates and rents in *zamindari* accounts were taught in Subhankari under the name of *jamabandi*, and mensuration of plane figures were taught under Subhankari as *bighakali* and *kathakali*. It was, therefore, decided to simplify matters by classifying all the above subjects under Subhankari. The alterations also necessitated a redistribution of marks and the revised standard now assumed the following shape :³¹

	Marks
1. (a) <i>Natun Path</i> , by Chandra Nath Basu, revised edition containing a lesson on Geography,	
explanation	75
(b) Handwriting	50
(c) Reading text book	25
(d) Reading manuscript	50
	<hr/> 200
2. (a) Arithmetic, first four rules simple and compound	80
Mental Arithmetic (European and Indian) ...	60
	<hr/> 140

29. *Ibid.*

30. *Education Proceedings*, No. 18 and 19, File 2S-1, March 1897,

31. *Ibid.*

	Marks
3. <i>Subhankari</i> , including :	
(a) Country tables, weights and measures	40
(b) <i>Monkasa</i> , <i>Serkasa</i> , and <i>Sonakasa</i>	40
(c) <i>Bighakali</i> , <i>Kathakali</i> and <i>Jamabandi</i>	40
(d) <i>Masmahina</i>	40
	<hr/> 160
4. <i>Saral Sarir Palan</i> by Jadunath Mukherjee or) <i>Swastha Raksha Prabeshika</i> by Radhika Prasanna) Mukherjee) Explanation	75
Reading	25
	<hr/> 100
Total =	600

The total marks were not increased and remained the same as before. Under the redistribution, marks under Arithmetic (European) were raised from 75 to 80 and the rest of the adjustment was centered around *Subhankari* which was now split up into four clear groups. An optional book, *Swastha Raksha Prabeshika* was added to the original *Saral Sarir palan*. Schools now were given the choice of opting for either one of the two. Like the *Saral Sarir palan*, *Swastha Raksha Prabeshika* dealt with a similar theme and was concerned with measures for the preservation of health. The most important feature of the revised standard was the addition to *Nutan path* of a lesson on geography. This indicated that the government was now contemplating an enlargement of the curriculum. That geography was not made a separate subject but was placed as a section in *Nutan path* signified the caution with which the

government was handling the case. The government was not going to rush in with drastic measures but rather planned to introduce changes gradually. Its intentions were clear enough and one could plainly see that the new additions to the syllabus were intended to prepare the ground for more important changes in this direction.

As can be seen, the obligatory introduction of printed books did not induce any major development of the curriculum except for the inclusion of a lesson on geography in 1897. The syllabus remained practically unchanged and the use of two printed primers were retained, although the books were replaced by more practical ones. It may be recalled here that the lower primary scholarship examination was the highest standard that the lower primary schools could aspire to teach. In fact many of these schools never reached that standard and few actually sent pupils to be examined by this standard. Schools aiming for the lower primary scholarship examination were, in any case, using printed books and it was not really surprising that the curriculum of the lower primary scholarship examination remained uninfluenced by this measure. The stress on the use of printed primers was not meant to usher in greater qualitative changes at the top but rather to improve the standard of those languishing at the bottom, i.e., those who were going to schools but not using any books. We shall see later, statistically, whether any positive results were achieved by this policy and will now move on to examine the various attempts made at standardizing the system of administering grants.

As noted in chapter IV, the system of payment by results was gradually introduced in Bengal as it was found capable of sustaining maximum expansion on a limited budget. The Education Commission Report of 1882 also urged the adoption of payment by results system except in backward localities, but when the control of the primary grants was transferred to the District Boards, the policy which most of them at the outset seemed to favour was that of gradually replacing the results by the stipendiary system.³² This tendency of the District Boards was severely criticised by the Director in his Report for

32, *Progress of Education in India, Second Quinquennial Review, 1886-87 to 1891-92*, p. 148.

1810-91 and by 1981-92 a revision of the system of stipends to schools was ordered. To act as a check against the replacement of rewards by fixed stipends, it was now laid down that no stipends would be allotted to those schools which were well established, well attended and received sufficient fee receipts to continue independently. Schools in backward tracts only would be maintained with stipends and the fees of the pupils. However, for those schools falling between the two groups, a sum of Rs 3 to Rs 6 a quarter was to be given as advance deductible from the reward they might afterwards earn at the examination.³³ This tripartite system of administering grants practically continued unchanged down to the end of the century.

The basis on which the grants were given underwent important modifications in this period. Prior to 1883-84, lower primary scholars were often divided into four, five or even six classes, with separate standards and fixed rates of reward for each.³⁴ This cumbersome process was now replaced by a new scheme, which recognized the basic condition of reading printed book, and proposed that below the standard of the lower primary scholarship there would be two standards only defined as follows :³⁵

A (or higher standard) :

- (i) Reading 50 pages of *Bodhoday* or an equivalent book ; dictation ; handwriting ; reading of manuscript, such as kabuliyats, pottahs, receipts, and forms of contract ; repetition of prose and poetry,
- (ii) The first four simple rules of arithmetic, after the English method.
- (iii) Subhankari, including tables of weights and measures, and wages, and bazaar accounts after the native method.
- (iv) Mental arithmetic, after European and native methods.

33. *RPIB*, 1891-92, p. 52.

34. *RPIB*, 1883-84, p. 73.

35. *Ibid.*

B (or lower standard) :

- (i) Reading a printed primer, such as *Sishusiksha*, Part III, or an equivalent book ; dictation ; handwriting ; repetition of prose or poetry.
- (ii) Tables of rupees, annas, and pies ; maunds, seers, &c. ; with their written signs, after the native method.
- (iii) Mental arithmetic after the native method.

As can be seen, the stress on the reading of a printed primer is evident in both standards. Also, the local methods of arithmetic and accounting were not neglected. In fact, standard B, apart from the reading of a printed primer, was confined wholly to traditional methods of instruction. Standard A was lower than the scholarship standard in that the reading of *Bodhoday* was to be restricted to 50 pages and the reading of the *Sanitary Primer* was not needed. Standard A was one year below the lower primary scholarship course and standard B still a year lower.³⁶ From now on, teachers would qualify for rewards on the basis of their pupils successfully passing by the above two standards. The maximum reward that one could earn was fixed differently for different regions, the rate varying according to local considerations.³⁷

Before the introduction of this scheme there was no uniform yardstick of proficiency at different sub-centre examinations. Different standards of proficiency were often adopted and applied to different schools at one and the same examination and hence the rewards granted were not distributed strictly in accordance with the educational results attained. The new scheme eliminated this problem and introduced a degree of uniformity in the primary system allowing to estimate the progress made year by year.

The Education Commission Report (1882) had recommended that the examination of primary schools by inspecting officers be conducted as far as possible *in situ*, and all primary schools receiving

36. *RPIB*, 1891-92, pp. 65-66.

37. *Progress of Education in India*, Third Quinquennial Review, 1892-93 to 1896-97, p. 713.

aid be invariably inspected *in situ*.³⁸ Prior to this recommendation, the normal practice was to distribute rewards on the basis of examination held at central gatherings. Examinations at central gatherings often caused much hardship to little children having to travel long distances to attend. Such a system also presented greater facilities for cheating as many *gurus* did not hesitate to present fictitious pupils at central examinations.³⁹ Examination *in situ* was meant to eliminate these problems as under it sub-inspectors would be personally responsible for the existence and progress of the *patshalas* and would not have to rely on the statement of the chief *guru* or inspecting pundit (the role of the chief *guru*/inspecting pundit will be discussed at a later stage) as to the genuine character of the schools assembled for examination. The measure was clearly designed to ensure greater accuracy of returns submitted and tighter control by the education department over these schools. The examination *in situ* scheme involved stricter enforcement of inspection procedures and was part of the government strategy of consolidating its control over the *patshalas*. However, in practice, it proved to be very difficult to implement the recommendation owing to the lack of sufficient staff to back up the measure.

Instead of examinations *in situ*, many of the Eastern Bengal districts adopted (around 1882-83) the system of holding examination of all the *patshalas* of a district on the same day.⁴⁰ This was, no doubt, intended to prevent the presentation of the same boys at more centres than one. But, since every centre did not have a Sub-Inspector attached to it, the results were not really tested by departmental agency, and hence, the measure was not viewed with favour by the Department.⁴¹ Only in the Presidency (and Chota Nagpur) Division was the examination for rewards conducted *in situ* as recommended by the Education Commission and, until 1892, the rest of Bengal preferred to continue with central examinations.

38. REC, 1882, pp. 586-587.

39. RPIB, 1889-90, p. 61.

40. RPIB, 1884-85, para. 135 (page number not readable).

41. RPIB, 1889-90, p. 62.

In 1892, the government ordered the adoption of the practice of holding the reward examination *in situ* by Sub-Inspectors instead of the system of simultaneous examinations at central gatherings.⁴² Following this declaration, attempts were made to hold examination for rewards *in situ* in all divisions except the Eastern Circle. The Eastern Bengal Divisions had protested against the ruling at the very outset. They contended that the small number of Sub-Inspectors made it impossible for them to conduct examinations *in situ* and they also pointed out that the existence of numerous secondary schools in Eastern Bengal ensured that there would be little difficulty in securing the services of competent boards of examiners at convenient centres all over the district. After a protracted correspondence, the Eastern Circle was exempted from the general rule and was permitted to continue the practice of holding the central examination system.⁴³

It is clear then, that despite government's intentions, no uniform policy regarding the conduct of examinations existed down to the end of the century. In some regions examinations were held *in situ*, in others at central gatherings, local considerations dictating the form to be adopted.

Again, great diversity existed between different districts regarding the standard of lower primary scholarship examination. Although the syllabus for the exam was fixed, there was no uniformity in the setting of question papers and it was not uncommon to find different schools in the same circle to be subjected to different question papers. This made it difficult to assess the value of pass certificates in the different districts of the same division.

The Eastern Circle divisions were the first to attempt a common examination aimed at maintaining a uniformity of standard. In 1885, Dhaka and Chittagong division conducted the lower primary scholarship examination on the same date by a uniform set of questions prepared by examiners appointed by the Circle Inspector.⁴⁴

42. *Education Proceedings*, No. 9-13, File 3P-2, March 1894.

43. *Ibid.*

44. *RPIB*, 1887-88, p. 63 and *RPIB*, 1886-87, p. 55.

Only the examination of the answer papers were to be undertaken by locally appointed examiners. Most of the other Divisions were also inclined to follow the footsteps of Eastern Bengal,⁴⁵ but not until 1893-94 was the decision taken to make it obligatory for all other divisions to conduct examinations in the same way.⁴⁶ Even then, the examination of answer papers were left to be valued by local examiners in each district.

Despite achieving uniformity in the standard of examination, many anomalies still remained. These stemmed mainly from local peculiarities, in the different standards which the examiners believed ought to be attained, and in the nature of the questions set. Thus, the results of two divisions could vary widely depending on the standards of the examiners. Although an improvement on the old system, under which each district had its own questions, the new system too was not completely secure and was open to criticism.⁴⁷ Nevertheless, it did provide a degree of uniformity lacking before and we shall see later how the different divisions compared on this basis of examination.

(iii) *Raising Standards for Gurus*

On account of the stress placed on the use of printed books, it became imperative now to employ as teachers of lower primary schools only those persons capable of reading and explaining passages from books. The *gurus* of the old class, unaccustomed to the use of printed books, now became useless in the eyes of the Department. New teachers for the lower primary schools were now generally recruited from the schools for secondary instruction, sometimes from the upper primary or even the lower primary schools, but very rarely from amongst those educated in the indigenous *patshalas* of the country.⁴⁸ Thus, the old *gurus* were generally being displaced and replaced by a new generation of teachers who were

45. *RPIB*, 1886-87, p. 55.

46. *RPIB*, 1893-94, p. 73.

47. *RPIB*, 1898-99, p. 86.

48. *RPIB*, 1886-87, p. 58.

taught and trained from the very beginning in government aided institutes.

The employment of these new teachers gave rise to a new problem. The emphasis on the use of printed books led to a neglect of the teaching of the traditional *patshala* subjects of Subhankari and *zamindari/mahajani* accounts and the indigenous system of mental arithmetic. Since many of the new *gurus* were unable to teach these subjects properly, they naturally tended to neglect it preferring to push on with what they knew better.⁴⁹

New forms of supervision were tried in this period to extend effective control of the Department over aided *gurus* and to try to improve the standard of the *gurus*. Two closely related systems, developed in the late 1870's were now taken up for general adoption in Bengal. The 'chief *guru*' system had been devised by Bhudev Mukherjee and first put into operation in Bihar in 1878-79⁵⁰ and Inspecting Pundits were first organized in Orissa in 1880-81⁵¹ but by 1888-89, both systems were operating in practically all divisions of Bengal.⁵² Often the two systems were classed together in the departmental reports as their functions were in many respects similar.

Under the 'chief *guru*' system, every district was divided into small circles consisting of a group of *patshalas* and the best of the stipendiary *gurus* in the circle was designated as the 'chief *guru*'.⁵³ Apart from teaching in his own *patshala*, the 'chief *guru*' was required to inspect other *patshalas* of his circle, instructing both the teachers and advanced students, for which he received a small allowance. Among his other duties were to collect returns and check their accuracy; summon *gurus* and pupils of *patshalas* to central gatherings, distribute registers, books, and rewards to teachers or pupils, and generally act as an intermediate agent between the Department and

49. *RPIB*, 1883-84, p. 71.

50. *RPIB*, 1878-79, p. 66.

51. *RPIB*, 1880-81, p. 55.

52. *RPIB*, 1888-89, p. 11.

53. Sheela Bose, 'A Study in the Mass Education policy of the Government of Bengal (1854-1882)', *Bengal past and present*, vol. XCVII, no. 185, (July-December), 1978, p. 175.

the village schools.⁵⁴ Thus, the function of the 'chief guru' was in many respects analogous to the earlier introduced circle system of Inspector Woodrow.

Unlike 'chief gurus,' inspecting pundits did not have any schools of their own to teach. But, like them, they too were to instruct the teachers of schools in their jurisdiction (Normally there was to be one inspecting pundit to every *thana*) in the art of teaching. Inspecting pundit's duties were to inspect all primary schools within the *thana*, thoroughly examine the classes taught and see that each school taught the course of the class to which it belonged. It was also his duty to ensure that pupils were properly arranged in classes, that the registers of attendance were regularly maintained, that the routine and list of studies were duly hung up on the school wall, and that all departmental orders were fully obeyed and carried out by the teachers. These functions were, of course, similar to those of the 'chief gurus'. But in addition, the inspecting pundits had some other important duties as well. They were to keep the Sub-Inspectors regularly informed of the closing of old and opening of new schools, the raising of lower primary schools into the upper primary standard and vice versa, and to select boys for the reward and lower primary scholarship examinations, and to grant them certificates of eligibility. These certificates of eligibility were to be issued only after the pundit was fully satisfied that the pupils selected by him possessed a fair knowledge of the subjects of examination and that the school had observed all the departmental rules in force. Since the inspecting pundits had wider responsibilities than the 'chief gurus', their salary was also much higher. The pay of inspecting pundits was fixed at Rs 15 with an additional Rs 5 as travelling allowance. Only those who had a thorough knowledge of mental arithmetic and *zamindari* / *mahajani* accounts were to be recruited, and holders of the vernacular mastership certificate were to be given distinct preference.⁵⁵

54. *REC*, 1882, p. 103.

55. This paragraph is based on information given in *Rules and Orders of the Bengal Education Department*, Second Edition, Bengal Secretariat Press, Calcutta, 1898, pp. 153-54.

The introduction of the 'chief *guau*' and 'inspecting pundit' systems had become necessary for the government in order to provide some form of inspection and thereby effective control over the large number of schools brought on the department list in the 1870's. To increase the required number of sub-inspectors for effective supervision would be extremely costly, hence the government opted for the cheaper way out by appointing less qualified 'chief *gurus*' and 'inspecting pundits' to do the job.⁵⁶ Both systems were gradually introduced and adopted in all divisions of Bengal and continued to operate till the end of the century.

It is clear from the duties of both 'chief *gurus*' and 'inspecting pundits', that their job was designed to raise the quality of elementary education through improving the *gurus*. Not only were they to give instructions to *gurus* in the art of proper teaching, but registers of attendance were to be kept, classes were to be arranged properly, the school's routine and list of studies were to be displayed prominently and the prescribed departmental course were to be taught systematically. These were the specific measures which had earlier been adopted by Bhudev Mukherjee in his improved *patshala* scheme. These were the measures which were deliberately dropped by Campbell as being insensitive and unsuitable to the real needs of the population. And now, practically the same measures were re-introduced again as the government attempted to consolidate its hold over the *patshalas*.

We have seen earlier in chapter IV that, by the end of 1875, the government of Bengal had no longer felt it necessary to maintain normal schools for *guru* training. The argument provided was that qualified teachers for the primary schools could be easily supplied from the middle schools of the country and hence *guru* training classes could be gradually closed without injury to the cause of elementary education. As a result of this policy, the number of normal schools fell from 41 in 1876 to 17 in 1879 and by 1881-82 there were only eight normal schools for training superior vernacular and ten for training village teachers, including the *guru* departments

56. *RPIB*, 1881-82, p. 10.

of first grade schools. These schools were maintained in the more backward districts where the number of middle and upper primary schools were not sufficient to ensure a regular supply of teachers for elementary schools.

The Government of India was not satisfied with the Bengal government's policy of leaving the supply of teachers for elementary schools to the operation of natural causes and the chances of the market and declared, in its Resolution on the report of the Education Commission (1882), that all teachers who were willing to undergo training should have opportunities of securing it, and that trained teachers should be made eligible for special grants.⁵⁷ In accordance with these orders, the Bengal government decided to re-introduce a new scheme for the training of *gurus*.

In 1885-86 the plan for *guru* classes for giving training to the ordinary teachers of village schools was revived. Headmasters of selected Middle Schools were authorized and encouraged to open classes for instructing *gurus* of neighbouring *patshalas* or intending *gurus* in the subjects of the upper primary examination, and giving them an elementary knowledge of school method.⁵⁸ The course of instruction was to last for one year and a reward of one rupee a month was to be given to the headmaster for each *guru* trained. However, the *gurus* themselves were not initially offered any inducements beyond the benefit of free tuition for the course. The amount at first sanctioned for the scheme was Rs 6,000 but from 1888-89 it was raised to Rs 9,000.

Table V. 9, on the following page, shows the number of *gurus* receiving training under the scheme.

The figures make it clear that the scheme was not applied with the same force in all the divisions. The scheme appeared to be most successful in the Presidency division which consistently returned the highest number of both *gurus* and schools. For the rest of the divisions, there was no uniform pattern with results varying from

57. *Review of Education in India*, 1886, p. 77.

58. *Progress of Education in India*, Second Quinquennial Review, 1886-87 to 891-92, p. 203.

TABLE V. 9 : DIVISIONAL PICTURE OF GURUS RECEIVING TRAINING BETWEEN 1886-87 AND 1890-91

Division	1886-87		1887-88		1888-89		1889-90		1890-91	
	Schools	Guru Pupils	Schools	Guru Pupils	Schools	Guru Pupils	Schools	Guru Pupils	Schools	Guru Pupils
Presidency	32	98	45	177	85	343	79	376	74	376
Burdwan	15	56	9	30	5	13	12	54	13	78
Dhaka	13	42	23	57	18	40	12	38	9	31
Chittagong	20	55	17	32	11	19	37	107	25	57
Rajshahi	4	9	30	126	19	67	32	92	29	88
Total	84	260	124	422	138	482	172	667	150	630

Source : Compiled from *Reports of Public Instruction in Bengal*, 1886-87 to 1890-91.

year to year. The average number of pupils to a *guru* training class was between 3 and 4 but in 1890-91 the average was slightly above 4. The progress of the scheme continued until 1889-90 after which advancement was halted and a positive decline set in, in both schools and pupils.

Until 1889-90 no inducements were given to the *gurus* to submit to training. Participating *gurus* after completing their course of instruction, were required to pass either the middle vernacular or the upper primary examination and were issued with certificates based on their proficiency.⁵⁹ In 1890-91 (perhaps to make the scheme attractive) rewards were for the first time offered to the *gurus* themselves varying from Rs 10 to Rs 15 for passing the Middle Vernacular examination and Rs 8 to Rs 12 for passing the Upper Primary examination, the actual amount depending on the division secured, e. g. 1st, 2nd or 3rd.⁶⁰ Table V, 10, on the following page, shows the number of *gurus* turned out with certificates from these classes between 1891-92 and 1893-94.

The table shows that the number of *gurus* obtaining certificates were steadily falling with every successive year. The best out-turn, in terms of quality judged by mere numbers, was shown by the Presidency division where the system received its largest development. However, if we relate the figures of passed *gurus* to total *gurus*, then Rajshahi obtains a higher position than the Presidency division. The table also indicates that the offer of rewards did not really act as a stimulant and was unable to halt the decline which started in 1890-91. The number of total *gurus* submitting to the scheme in 1890-91 was 630 and by 1893-94 their numbers fell further to 585. The falling numbers of participating *gurus* and the poor examination results made it clear that the scheme was not functioning satisfactorily. With the exception of the Presidency division, the Inspectors of all the other divisions were unanimous in considering the scheme unworkable.⁶¹ They held that the measure was both unpopular

59. *RPIB*, 1889-90, p. 65.

60. *RPIB*, 1890-91, p. 65.

61. *RPIB*, 1893-94, pp. 85-87.

TABLE V. 10 : DIVISIONAL PICTURE OF *GURUS* SUCCESSFULLY PASSING MIDDLE VERNACULAR AND UPPER PRIMARY EXAMINATION IN 1891-92, 1892-93 AND 1893-94

Division	Middle Vernacular Scholarship Exam	Upper Primary Scholarship Exam	Lower Primary Scholarship Exam	Guru Exam	Total Passed	Total Gurus	
Presidency	19	16	—	3	38	398	1891-92
Burdwan	—	2	—	—	2	82	
Dhaka	—	—	—	—	—	49	
Chittagong	2	1	—	—	3	23	
Rajshahi	4	11	—	—	15	46	
					58	598	
Presidency	27	5	—	—	32	370	1892-93
Burdwan	—	2	—	—	3	136	
Dhaka	1	—	—	—	1	106	
Chittagong	—	1	—	—	1	27	
Rajshahi	2	2	—	7	11	29	
					48	668	
Presidency	12	8	—	—	20	305	1893-94
Burdwan	3	6	—	—	9	137	
Dhaka	6	—	—	—	6	107	
Chittagong	—	—	—	—	—	22	
Rajshahi	3	3	—	—	6	14	
					41	585	

Source : *Compiled from the Reports of Public Instruction in Bengal, 1891-92 to 1893-94,*

and unnecessary : unpopular because few of the old *gurus* would be induced to leave their own *patshalas* for fear of losing their income or job ; and unnecessary because there was no dearth of middle and upper primary certificate holders willing to serve as teachers.⁶² Only in the Presidency division was it considered valuable as a cheap means of training *gurus*.

On the basis of the poor results and adverse criticism, it was decided to shelve the *guru*-training scheme at the end of 1893-94 except for the Presidency division where it was allowed to continue in those districts opting to retain the system.⁶³ Following this decision, reduction took place in subsequent years in every division and the scheme was totally abolished in 1897-98, no schools being returned even for the Presidency division.⁶⁴

It is evident from the foregoing discussion that by the end of the century a new group of *gurus* had risen up to take control of the *patshalas* and were in the process of displacing the old traditional *gurus*. This development was in line with the changed government policy which now stressed the raising of the standard of elementary education. The traditional *gurus* were looked upon by the Department as old stubborn men unwilling and incapable of changing their habits, customs and practices. It, therefore, became necessary to raise up a new cadre of *gurus* to push through the government's ideas of change. Consequently, the support and patronage formerly extended to the old *gurus* was gradually withdrawn and directed towards the building up of a new class of *gurus*. The new *gurus* were chosen from men who had passed through the government aided schools and were therefore expected to be more amenable to carry out government changes. Unfortunately, available statistics do not allow us to estimate what was left of the traditional *guru* group and to what extent a new 'modern' group had emerged by the end of the century. On the basis of available evidence, the only positive observation that one can make is that the position of the old tradi-

62. *Ibid*, pp. 85, 86.

63. *Idid*, p. 88.

64. *RPIB*, 1897-98, p. 82.

tional *gurus* had considerably eroded in this period as a result of changed government policy and a new class of men were gradually being encouraged to take over control of the *patshalas*.

We are now in a position to try and determine the extent of success achieved by governmental efforts in raising the quality of elementary education. As in chapter IV, this will be tested mainly by the numbers returned as being not able to read a printed book and by the numbers passing scholarship examination.

TABLE V. 11 : PUPILS NOT HAVING ACCESS TO
PRINTED BOOKS : 1885 TO 1899

	Number of pupils on 31st March	Number of pupils not having access to printed books	% of pupils not having access to printed books to number of pupils
1885	1153002	523627	45.4
1886	1019072	425838	41.7
1887	997542	408722	40.9
1888	1026269	410293	39.9
1889	—	—	—
1890	995238	365794	36.7
1891	—	—	—
1892	1030237	363327	35.2
1893	—	—	—
1894	1039555	339031	32.6
1895	1110385	350498	31.5
1896	1144511	348537	30.4
1897	—	—	—
1898	1086511	309166	28.4
1899	1110394	321904	28.9

Source : Compiled from the *Reports of Public Instruction in Bengal*, 1884-85 to 1898-99.

Table V. 11 shows that the government's direction of making the use of books obligatory for securing grants did achieve positive results. Every successive year from 1885 to 1898 showed a steady decline in the number of pupils not using printed books, the only exception being 1899 which was unable to record an improvement. It may be recalled here that 1885-86 was the first year to witness the effects of the government's weeding-out campaign and it is clearly apparent that the policy of consolidation and improvement did achieve success in so far as the use of printed primers was concerned. In 1881-82 only 40.4% of primary pupils were using books (see Chapter IV) and by 1899, 71.1 % of pupils were using books demonstrating, no doubt, that considerable success had been achieved in the period.

Table V. 12 will now show the pattern within the different divisions and districts of Bengal. The figures given are for the year 1898-99.

TABLE V. 12 : DISTRICT WISE AND DIVISIONAL PATTERN
OF PUPILS NOT HAVING ACCESS TO PRINTED BOOKS,
1898-99

	Total Pupils in Lower Primary Stage	Not having access to printed books	% of pupils not having access to printed books to total pupils
Burdwan	40255	7559	18.7
Birbhum	22375	6010	26.8
Bankura	38234	4519	11.8
Midnapur	118043	35315	29.9
Hooghly	38322	8018	20.9
Howrah	27664	7776	28.1
Burdwan Division	284893	69197	24.2

TABLE V. 12 (contd.)

	Total Pupils in Lower Primary Stage	Not having access to printed books	% of pupils not having access to printed books to total pupils
24-Pargana	64741	16934	26.1
Nadia	27300	7227	26.4
Murshidabad	22216	3521	15.8
Jessore	31841	5880	18.4
Khulna	28085	6373	22.6
Calcutta	19255	4162	21.6
Presidency Division	193438	44097	22.7
Rajshahi	17391	2493	14.3
Dinajpur	20148	349	1.7
Jalpaiguri	10905	108	0.9
Darjeeling	3104	1258	40.5
Rangpur	26206	3422	13.0
Bogra	12117	2197	18.1
Pabna	18154	2803	15.4
Rajshahi Division	108025	12630	11.6
Dhaka	47097	7717	16.3
Mymensingh	49791	2982	5.9
Faridpur	36696	9538	25.9
Barisal	74057	24648	33.2
Dhaka Division	207641	44885	21.6

TABLE V. 12 (contd.)

	Total Pupils in Lower Primary Stage	Not having access to printed books	% of pupils not having access to printed books to total pupils
Comilla (Tippera)	48919	9669	19.7
Noakhali	24098	6327	26.2
Chittagong	33611	1551	4.6
Chittagong Hill Tracts	1083	60	5.5
Chittagong Division	107711	17607	16.3

Source : *Report of Public Instruction in Bengal*, 1898-99, p. 79.

Once again we see that a wide degree of variation existed between the different districts and divisions of Bengal. Even within the same divisions, the performance of different districts varied considerably. Thus, Chittagong returned only 4.6 percent pupils as not reading books compared to 26.2 percent for neighbouring Noakhali district. The commonly held notion that Western Bengal was more advanced than other regions does not appear to hold by this test. In fact, the Northern Bengal division of Rajshahi and the Eastern Bengal divisions of Chittagong and Dhaka all had more pupils reading books than the Presidency or Burdwan divisions. The explanation for this lies probably in the fact that the Presidency and Burdwan divisions had the largest endowment of old traditional *patshalas* and hence found it more difficult to introduce printed books here than, say, in Chittagong where schools were of relatively recent origin and hence more conducive to accept new innovations. If the use of printed books is taken as a proof of advancement, then the table shows that districts with more schools and scholars were not necessarily more advanced. This is borne out by the performance of several districts, e. g. Midnapur, Barisal, etc., which had a large

number of boys at school and yet recorded a high proportion of them as not reading books.

Table V. 13, on the following page, will now compare the results of the lower primary scholarship examination between 1884-85 and 1898-99.

No conclusive picture can be drawn from the table. The number of competing schools and scholars no doubt increased but, if passing the examination be taken as a criterion of advancement, then it is clear that nothing dramatic has taken place. There is no continuous level of improvement, the figures varying considerably between different years. However, it ought to be noted that by 1898-99, a relatively higher percentage of the schools and candidates had been successful in the examination than in 1884-85. This suggests that a general advancement did take place over the period.

Table V. 14, at page 149, shows the results of the lower primary scholarship examination for boys distributed between different divisions for the two years 1884-85 and 1898-99.

By 1898-99, Burdwan and Presidency divisions clearly recorded a much higher percentage of successful schools and candidates than the other divisions. Whereas the performance of Burdwan, Presidency, and Rajshahi divisions improved over the period, that of Dhaka and Chittagong deteriorated considerably. This is not surprising, if we consider that different questions were set in different divisions and the answer papers were valued by local examiners whose opinions often varied as to the standard attained. Indeed great fluctuations in the results of the same division in successive years occurred frequently. In the two years 1897-98 and 1898-99, the percentage of passes in Burdwan division went up from 55.8 to 75.3, in the Presidency division it rose from 49 to 64, while at the same time it fell in the Dhaka division from 68.5 to 35.5 and in Chittagong from 77.8 to 45.2.⁶⁵ The lack of a Board of Examiners assessing answer papers no doubt often did affect the outcome of examination results. But this should not diminish the value of the results as a basis for comparison. Human opinion and judgement will always

65. *RPIB*, 1898-99, p. 86.

TABLE V. 13 : STATISTICS OF SCHOOLS AND SCHOLARS SUCCESSFULLY PASSING
LOWER PRIMARY SCHOLARSHIP EXAMINATION BETWEEN 1884-85 AND 1898-99

Year	Competing schools	Successful schools	% of successful schools	Competing candidates	Successful candidates	% of successful candidates
1884-85	11,406	8,129	71.2	43,410	21,500	49.5
1885-86	10,794	7,589	70.3	38,413	20,018	52.1
1886-87	9,639	7,193	74.6	34,561	20,275	58.6
1887-88	10,379	7,087	68.2	37,459	18,845	50.3
1888-89	10,032	7,467	74.2	35,784	20,617	57.6
1889-90	9,825	6,784	69.0	32,634	17,614	53.9
1890-91	9,163	6,586	71.8	29,616	16,183	54.6
1891-92	10,001	7,244	72.4	32,764	18,630	56.8
1892-93	10,597	6,923	65.3	34,754	17,000	48.9
1893-94	10,498	6,931	66.0	33,444	16,864	50.4
1894-95	11,263	7,397	65.6	36,208	19,675	54.3
1895-96	12,413	8,528	68.7	40,123	21,784	54.2
1896-97	13,326	10,063	75.5	N/A	27,088	—
1897-98	12,725	10,460	76.2	N/A	28,761	—
1898-99	13,482	10,454	77.5	45,339	28,438	62.7

Source : Compiled from the *Reports of Public Instruction in Bengal*, 1884-85 to 1898-99.

TABLE V. 14 : DIVISIONAL DISTRIBUTION OF SCHOOLS AND SCHOLARS SUCCESSFULLY PASSING LOWER PRIMARY SCHOLARSHIP EXAMINATION IN 1884-85 AND 1898-99

Divisions	Competing schools	Successful schools	% of successful schools	Competing candidates	Successful candidates	% of successful candidates
<u>1884-85</u>						
Presidency	737	459	62.2	2214	900	40.6
Burdwan	2227	1441	64.7	8082	3712	45.9
Rajshahi	871	477	54.7	2314	808	34.9
Dhaka	1316	864	65.6	4217	1978	46.9
Chittagong	456	343	75.2	1642	829	50.4
<u>1898-99</u>						
Presidency	1956	1623	82.9	6728	4328	64.3
Burdwan	3165	2852	90.1	11677	8804	75.3
Rajshahi	1325	874	65.9	3340	1595	47.7
Dhaka	1686	961	56.9	5511	1955	35.4
Chittagong	889	597	67.1	2901	1313	45.2

Source : Compiled from the *Reports of Public Instruction in Bengal, 1884-85 and 1898-99.*

vary from person to person and while guidelines set by a Board of Examiners may help to standardize marking, it will by no means eliminate the problem altogether. This table tends to show that judged by the ability of passing lower primary scholarship standard, Western Bengal was clearly more advanced than the other regions.

Table V. 14 is concerned with results based on competing candidates and successful candidates but it does not really tell us which division sent up more pupils (proportionally) to sit for the exam. Table V. 15 will now show what percentage of lower primary pupils in each division actually competed in the lower primary examination for the year 1898-99.

TABLE V. 15 : PROPORTION OF PUPILS ACTUALLY
COMPETING IN THE LOWER PRIMARY
SCHOLARSHIP IN 1898-99

Divisions	Total number of lower primary pupils	Pupils actually competing in the lower primary scholar- ship exam	Percentage of competing pupils to total pupils
Presidency	132537	6728	5.0
Burdwan	23.282	11677	5.0
Rajshahi	81557	3340	4.0
Dhaka	146832	5511	3.7
Chittagong	77066	2901	3.7

Source : Compiled from the *Report of Public Instruction in Bengal, 1898-99.*

Burdwan and Presidency divisions were clearly ahead of the other divisions when judged on the basis of candidates sent up for the examination. The two Eastern Bengal divisions of Dhaka and Chittagong emerged as the most backward by this test. All lower primary scholarship candidates, even if they failed to pass the examination, must still be considered as reasonably proficient by lower primary standards and well above the general mass of scholars whose attainments did not reach the level of being even considered as candidates for the scholarship. As we know, part of the inspecting pundit's duty was to issue certificates of eligibility to prospective lower primary scholarship examination candidates. These certificates were to be issued only if the pundit was convinced after personal scrutiny that the candidate had reached the lower primary scholarship standard and had a fair chance of passing the exam. This test was, therefore, a more reliable yardstick than the others and it would appear that Burdwan and Presidency divisions, although having a lower proportion of pupils reading printed books, was in reality more advanced than the other divisions.

To sum up, the Bengal government in this period clearly paid no attention to the Education Commission's recommendation and made no attempts to extend the growth of elementary education. Its declared policy was one of consolidation and improvement rather than expansion. In line with its policy, it embarked on a campaign of deliberately weeding out inferior schools and aiding only large, well-established ones. The result of this campaign was that this period witnessed practically no expansion in terms of pupil enrolment while there was a positive decline in the number of schools. This meant that pupil/school ratio increased considerably in the period. The schools weeded out by the government did not cease to exist altogether, only their names were struck off the government aided list. Many of these schools were probably now simply classified as private institutes and considerably swelled their numbers. The effects of the government's weeding out campaign were not uniformly severe in all regions. Chittagong and Dhaka divisions, which had shown the greatest expansion following Campbell's liberal measures,

were now the hardest hit and the correlation between the two is evident. The popular contention of the Education Department that the Chittagong division contained mainly small weak schools has been proven wrong. In fact, Chittagong division emerged second only to the Presidency division in recording the maximum number of large schools with more than 40 pupils each. Overall, there was a wide degree of variation between districts and divisions with regard to the position of schools and scholars.

The primary grant sanctioned by the Department was not administered uniformly between different regions and the distribution was not based on any clear cut yardstick. As a result some divisions benefitted more than others from this policy. The primary grant increased considerably between 1885-86 and 1898-99 although there was no increase in schools or scholars. This meant that the amount of aid received by these schools had increased and they became naturally more costly to maintain now. Once again, in line with its policy, the increased grant was not used by the Department to extend control over *Patshalas* but to consolidate and strengthen its hold over those *Patshalas* already submitting to Departmental influence.

The government's attempts at improvement in this period were mainly directed at making greater use of printed books. In this, government's efforts did achieve success as recorded by the fact that the number of pupils using books increased from 40.4 percent in 1881-82 to 71.1 percent in 1898-99. Initially, the government did not interfere with the curriculum set out in 1879 except for replacing *Cunningham's Sanitary Primer* with *Saral Sarir Palan*. But in 1894-95, *Bodhoday* (Reader) was also dropped and *Nutanpath*, a book which included lessons in agricultural topics, was chosen in its place. This is significant as it implied that the government's bias was changing from purely literary to practical needs as well. This tendency was further reinforced in 1897 when *Nutanpath* was revised with the addition of a lesson on geography as well. All this indicated that the government was perhaps contemplating an enlargement of the curriculum. The fact that geography was included as

a lesson and not a separate subject of study indicated the extreme caution with which government was handling the case.

In this period, the government made several changes in the system of administering grants as part of its policy of consolidating control over the *patshalas*. Various standards were now fixed for the grant of rewards. Thus, apart from the lower primary scholarship examination, the government fixed the curriculum for two other standards below that level, standards A and B, to be implemented uniformly all over Bengal for the purpose of securing grants. The government also standardised the rule that examinations for rewards would be held *in situ* for all divisions except Eastern Bengal where local peculiarities dictated the necessity of holding exams at central gatherings. Examination *in situ* was adopted as it would allow the Department to exercise close control over aided *patshalas*. The government also standardised examination procedures. It now stipulated that pupils sitting for the lower primary scholarship examination would be examined by the same set of question papers all over the same division. However, different divisions had the liberty of setting their own questions and, as such, the standard often varied between them. Also, there was no Board of Examiners for evaluating answer papers which were left to local examiners and hence made it difficult to compare accurately the performance of different regions. Notwithstanding these difficulties, an important step had been taken to attain uniformity in examination standards and, at least, within the divisions pupils were being examined on a fairer basis than before.

The government adopted the 'chief guru' and 'inspecting pundit' systems to provide for effective supervision and closer control over the large number of schools brought under its fold following Campbell's liberal policy. The 'chief gurus' and 'inspecting pundits' attempted to improve schools under their control in virtually the same manner as Bhudev had tried earlier in the 1860's. These included proper arrangement of classes, maintenance of attendance registers, routine and list of studies, etc. Unfortunately, the Reports of the Director of Public Instruction do not tell us the force with

which the above measures were applied and hence cannot comment on the reactions of the people to these measures.

The government also attempted to improve the quality of teachers by re-introducing the *guru* training scheme. The scheme was not tried with the same force in all the divisions and appeared to be successful only in the Presidency division. The poor response to the scheme finally led to its abandonment in 1897-98. The Reports of Public Instruction do not give us statistics of the distribution of trained teachers in the different divisions of Bengal and as such we cannot determine how the *guru* training scheme affected the different divisions. That the scheme on the whole had little effect is clear from the fact that in 1901-02, out of a total of 50,491 teachers in primary schools for boys and girls, only 2052 were classified as being trained.⁶⁶ This meant that, roughly only one out of every 25 teachers was trained. Not only were most primary school teachers untrained, but also there appeared to have been no increase in the ratio of the number of teachers to a school and, as in Adam's time most, primary schools in Bengal were still being staffed by a single teacher. In 1901-02, Bengal had on an average only 106 teachers for every 100 primary boys' schools.⁶⁷

The stress on the use of printed books had severe consequences for the traditional *gurus*. It now became important to employ as teachers those capable of reading books. In the changed atmosphere, the old *gurus* found their position slipping as the Department began to raise a new cadre of teachers. The new teachers were recruited from young men who had passed through the government aided schools and, who would, therefore, be more willing to implement government sponsored changes. Unfortunately the Reports of Public Instruction do not give us statistics of new recruitment of teachers and hence we cannot comment accurately on the extent to which the old *gurus* were actually displaced by new teachers in this period.

66. *Progress of Education in India*, Fourth Quinquennial Review, 1897-98 to 1901-02, p. 617.

67, *Ibid.*, p. 618,

An analysis of the different tables confirms the varying nature of the different regions of Bengal. Judged by the criterion of reading printed books, Burdwan and Presidency divisions, generally considered to be the most advanced, came out as the most backward. The answer probably lay in the fact that Burdwan and Presidency divisions had the largest number of *patshalas* with old *gurus* still finding it difficult to adapt to the change involved in the use of books. The fact that the *guru* training scheme was mainly tried in the presidency division tends to support this view. In the other divisions, particularly Eastern Bengal region, many of the *patshalas* were newly set up with teachers not really representatives of the old *guru* class and hence were more amenable to using printed books from the very beginning. In any case, it is difficult to form firm opinions as to the advancement of a division based on the mere ability to read a book although it is a useful exercise to see how different divisions stand on that basis. The second and third test (performance at the lower primary scholarship exam, and percentage of lower primary candidates to total pupils), however, confirmed that Burdwan and Presidency divisions were much more advanced than the other divisions.

Finally, many important changes had been made in this period in the working of the traditional *patshala*. These changes related mainly to the obligatory use of printed books, employment of a new class of teachers to replace old *gurus* (whenever possible), standardization of examination procedures and basis for sanction of grants; closer inspection arrangements, and broadening of the curriculum. *Patshalas* affected by these changes were clearly functioning in a different atmosphere as compared to the old *patshalas* where there was no such control. The old *patshala* had been free to pursue its policies as it thought best. But now everything was being standardized as the *patshalas* were gradually converted into Departmental schools. Interestingly, despite the above changes, no real attempts had been made to induce any improvements or change in the method of instruction followed in the *patshalas*. The curriculum had been modified but the teaching method remained basically the same.

complete break with the past and opened the way to the final transformation of *patshalas* into schools on the new departmental model. The object of this chapter is to analyse the measures introduced by the new syllabus and to try and assess the resultant effects of the new policy.

A. Character of Committee Appointed for Drafting New Syllabus.

Since the late 1870's the Government of India as well as the Government of Bengal was dissatisfied with the existing vernacular curriculum and felt the need of revising the scheme of studies for vernacular schools. The form of this change received its initial impetus from recommendations which came to Bengal from the Government of India, for a more "practical" basis for Indian elementary education.

In 1889, Dr. Voelcker, Agricultural Chemist to the Royal Society, came to India from England to advise the government on questions related to agriculture¹. His recommendation, that elementary instruction in agriculture be imparted in primary schools, was approved by a representative committee appointed to consider his report. The committee further proposed that education in the lower schools be of such a practical character as to fit the pupils for technical pursuits and that object lessons should be introduced. The Government of India fully endorsed the above proposal and declared 'that primary education should be given more of a practical bias ; that it should be planned so as to train the hand, the eye and the intelligence of the pupil ; and that any system of practical education in rural schools must, for whatever class intended, acquire an agricultural colouring, because the surrounding objects are themselves agricultural.'

The Bengal Government set up a committee to determine the best means of giving effect to the above recommendations of the Government of India. The committee proposed that the course in

1. This para is based on H. Stark, "Vernacular Education in Bengal", *Calcutta Review*, 1916, pp. 382-83.

science in elementary schools be recast to include agricultural science. But this proposal was considered inadequate by the Lt-Governor, Sir Charles Elliott, who felt that the entire system of vernacular education in Bengal needed remodelling.²

Accordingly, in 1898, the Government of Bengal appointed a committee of educational experts to revise the subjects and courses with the text books used in connection with vernacular education in Bengal.³ The Committee, headed by the Director of Public Instruction, included the Inspector of Schools Presidency Circle, Principal of Government School of Arts, two Professors of the Presidency College, Professor of Agriculture in the Sibpur Engineering College, the Head Master of the Hare School and the Headmaster of the Calcutta Training School for Teachers.⁴ The general question before the committee was to frame a new curriculum suited to the needs of the agricultural population but it was also emphasised that the problem to be pursued was 'not merely how the children of cultivators might be provided with an education suited to their everyday life, but how a scheme of education might be evolved which would promote in all pupils the power of assimilating technical instruction of any kind.'⁵ With this end in view, the Committee were clearly told by the Bengal Government that the aim in making alterations in

2. *Ibid.*, p. 384.

3. *Review of Education in Bengal, 1897-98 to 1901-02*, p. 65.

4. *Ibid.*

Composition of the Committee was :

Alex Pedler (Director of Public Instructions) —president

E. B. Havell

Radhika Prasanna Mukherjee

J. C. Bose

P. C. Ray

N. G. Mukherjee

Barada Prasad Ghosh

Rasamay Mitra

Members

Unfortunately, the Report does not give the designations of the members of the committee.

5. Stark, P. 384

As the Fourth Quinquennial Review of the Progress of Education in India (1896-97 to 1901-02) noted :

“the ordinary village lower primary school has only one teacher. Sometimes he may not have more than 10 to 20 pupils, but in a large village the number may be as many as 60 or even more. From the infant stage upwards the pupils are divided into five classes. In the better schools the teacher sits in the middle of one side of the room and the pupils are arranged all round the wall ; the highest class sitting on his immediate right, and so on in gradation. In other schools the children sit pell mell on the floor. There is no defined monitorial system, but one or two of the bigger boys help the teacher with the lower classes and exercise an authority which is as much feared as that of the *guru* himself.”⁶⁸

CHAPTER VI

THE NEW EDUCATION IN BENGAL : THE 1900 SYLLABUS FOR THE 'KINDERGARTEN' AND 'LOWER PRIMARY YEARS' AND ITS PROBLEMS

Following the Despatch of 1854, the Bengal government tried in various ways to control and improve indigenous elementary education. The attempts at improvement were based on changing the nature of the traditional *patshalas* to conform to Departmental ideas. The plan was to induce changes in the indigenous schools without supplanting them completely by a new system. This policy was adopted, not because the authorities were appreciative of what was taught in the indigenous schools, but because their tight financial position and the popular acceptance of the indigenous schools dictated the necessity of such a step.

The attempts at improvement of the elementary schools were mainly directed in popularising the use of printed books and through it a gradual widening of the curriculum. And, although some attempts were also made to improve the method of instruction adopted in these schools, yet care was taken to ensure the preservation of indigenous characteristics as a means of retaining the popularity of these institutes. The policy of experimenting with indigenous education principles was continued till 1899, when a new policy was drawn up involving the introduction of new elements in Bengal's education system. The former syllabus for lower primary schools was now discarded and a new syllabus was announced which contained revolutionary changes aimed at altering the entire educational structure. The new syllabus formed the keystone of the new education policy and was based on completely new concepts so far as Bengal was concerned. Its implementation required a

the present system of education should be 'more to develop the minds of the boys than to strengthen their memories'.⁶

The choice of the Committee members was apparently dictated by the Government's desire of introducing new subjects of a technical character hitherto untaught in the vernacular schools of Bengal. The Government had clearly told the Committee that it was in favour of introduction of Agriculture, Natural History, Sanitation and Physics as compulsory subjects in vernacular schools.⁷ And the inclusion in the Committee of men with scientific experience was no doubt to facilitate change along these lines. The President of the Committee, Mr. Alex Pedler, had formerly been a Professor of Chemistry at the Presidency College, Calcutta, and had also served as Inspector of Schools, Western and Bihar circles, before taking up the post of Director of Public Instruction.⁸ While officiating as Inspector of Schools, he had strongly criticized the existing educational system and had urged the government to pay stricter attention to the quality of primary education given.⁹ Now, he was made the President of the Committee and asked to do what he had earlier suggested, e. g., introduce qualitative improvements in the curriculum.

The choice of the Committee and the past views of the President of the Committee was indicative of the great many changes that were now to be introduced. The Committee submitted its first report on 6 April 1899 but a government decision on the proposals of the Committee was postponed pending consideration of public criticism of the scheme.

B. Conceptual Basis of the Syllabus.

The new scheme put forward by the Committee involved drastic changes in both the methods and subjects of the old *patshala* course. The Committee condemned the old system of education as being

6. *Education Proceedings*, 23-25, File 9A-1, September 1899.

7. *Ibid.*

8. *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 7th September, 1899.

9. *RPIB*, 1897-98, PP. 61-63

utterly defective and declared that to achieve the government's directive of evolving a system where 'more was done to develop the minds of the boys than to strengthen their memories, and to train the powers of observation and develop the power of the hand and the eye', the kindergarten principle of training would have to be introduced in Bengal.¹⁰ The kindergarten system, developed in Germany by Froebel, was then being increasingly practised all over Europe. Froebel's kindergarten was based on three features—the use of his "gifts", the singing of his songs, and the playing of different educational games in the play-circle.¹¹ His "gifts" consisted mainly of building blocks, coloured balls, cube, cylinder, sphere, etc. which were to be used differently for teaching children form, number, measurement and for other activities like modelling, drawing, colouring, and so on. Through the play-circle and play-songs children were to be instructed about ordinary objects and activities. The system was so designed as to help the child become educated by developing himself through his own creative activities.¹²

The kindergarten system was a completely new concept of child education and its introduction in Bengal necessarily involved a radical alteration in the methods of the old *patshalas*. The Committee members were fully aware of the difficulties involved in the introduction of the kindergarten system in Bengal. They knew very well that, because of the expenses involved, it would not be possible to provide the basic kindergarten equipments of Froebel in the primary schools of Bengal. But they believed it was the principle involved which was important, and suggested that the form of kindergarten to be adopted in Bengal be made suitable to the circumstances and local conditions of the pupils by basing the teaching on the use of objects freely found in almost every primary school.¹³

The essence of the kindergarten system was the full development

10. *Education proceedings*, 23-25, File 9A-1, September 1899.

11. Luella Cole, *A History of Education : Socrates to Montessori* (New York Rinehart and Company), 1950, P. 530

12. *Ibid.*, PP. 528-29.

13. *Education Proceedings*, 23-25, File 9A-1, September 1899.

of the different faculties of the child in a manner designed to arouse the natural instincts of pupils. Kindergarten teaching encouraged pupils to think for themselves, to form their own judgement, and to express thoughts clearly in form and language. To foster physical exercise, children were urged to participate in games, marching and singing and to create moral consciousness teachers were required to tell stories with a moral basis. Drawing and modelling in clay, paper, etc. were encouraged to stimulate the growth of creative qualities. The kindergarten system was based on learning through play and through observation and not on memorization. As such, it was expected to be more interesting and attractive to pupils than the old system of cramming.

A necessary corollary of kindergarten methods was object-lesson teaching whose chief aim was to call into activity observation and the construction of clear mental pictures allowing for the proper development of the intelligence of pupils.¹⁴ Object-lesson teaching was based on giving lessons through visible illustrations and was intended to have a more lasting impact on the minds of pupils. Both the Kindergarten system and object lesson teaching was recommended by the Committee for general adoption right from the infant stage to the end of the lower primary course.

Table VI. 1, on the following page, presents a comparison of the old and new courses.

It is apparent that the new course represented an almost total change from the old syllabus. Although the total course of reading was reduced from 274 pages to 179 pages, many new subjects were added to the course. Science Primers, Drawing, School drill and Object-lessons were completely new subjects introduced for the first time while the old literary Reader (*Nutanpath*) and the native system of arithmetic (Subhankari) were dropped from the syllabus. Hygiene was no longer to be treated as a separate subject but was included as a section in the Science Primers.

Table VI. 2 gives a more detailed view of the new syllabus and highlights the nature of teaching involved. (See pages 164 to 168.)

14. *Ibid.*

TABLE VI. 1 : COMPARATIVE PICTURE OF EXISTING COURSE AND NEW COURSE

EXISTING COURSE	NEW COURSE
1. One literature book (<i>Nutanpath</i>) including a lesson in Geography Handwriting Reading text-books Reading Manuscript } 84 pp.	1. Science Primers, Standards I & II Handwriting Reading } 69 pp. 2. Arithmetic, European & Native Mental arithmetic } 100 pp.
2a. Arithmetic-(100 pages) b. Mental Arithmeric (European & Native)	3. Drawing
3. Subhankari (Native arithmetic)-50 pp.	4. School Drill
4. Hygiene-(40 pages)	5. Object lessons on the sky and air and the subjects in Science (10 pages)
Total course of reading-274 pages	6. Manual work (optional)
	Total course of reading-179 pages

Source : *Educational Proceedings*, 14-18, File 1E-3, October 1900.

TABLE VI. 2 : DETAILED VIEW OF THE NEW SYLLABUS

Subject	Age 5	Age 6	Age 7	Age 8	Age 9
	First year of Infant Class	Second year of Infant Class	Third year of Infant Class : 'B' Class of Lower Primary School	Standard I : 'A' Class of Lower Primary School	Standard II : Lower Primary Class
Drawing (hand and eye training)	Straight, crooked, curved lines ; Squares, oblongs, circles.	Drawing of triangles, rectangles, pentagons, etc. Tracing outlines of flat objects.	Very simple free-hand drawing, tracing of flat objects and reproduction of outline, etc.	Free-hand drawing from copies on slates; first half of First School of Art Book	Free-hand drawing from copies on slates; second half of First School of Art Book
Kindergarten	Lessons through eye, hand, taste. Kindergarten occupations.	Lessons through eye, hand, taste, ear, smell, lessons on measurement. Kindergarten occupations.	Further lessons through the senses, measurements, weight, lessons about the notion of time. Kindergarten occupations.	Nil	Nil
Object Lessons	About school furniture, plants, human body, differences of animals.	About common plants, parts of body, a cat, etc.	On birds, cow ; on common metals and simple articles made from metals ; on plants yielding fibre etc., on domestic vessels ; on parts of the human body,	The sky ; subjects in science, etc., are to be treated as object lessons,	The air ; subjects in science, etc., are to be treated as object lessons.

TABLE VI. 2 (contd.)

Subject	Age 5	Age 6	Age 7	Age 8	Age 9
	First year of Infant Class	Second year of Infant Class	Third year of Infant Class. 'B' Class of Lower Primary School	Standard I : 'A' Class of Lower Primary School	Standard II : Lower Primary Class
Manual Training (Boys only)	Nil	Nil	Nil	Leaf-manipulation, paper cutting and folding.	Clay modelling.
Needlework (Girls only)	Nil	Nil	Hemming	Top sewing or seaming.	Running and felling and back stitching.
Drill (Boys only)	Simple action songs.	Simple action songs.	Elementary drill and gymnastics.	Drill and gymnastics.	Drill and gymnastics.
Drill (Girls only)	Simple action songs.	Simple action songs.	Elementary drill and calisthenics.	Drill and calisthenics.	Drill and Calisthenics.
Writing	Commence writing numerals.	Writing of simple arithmetic ; writing of letters.	Writing short words, etc., from dictation, writing sums.	Writing more complex words and sentences, etc.	Writing complex words and sentences, etc.
Arithmetic	Idea of number from object-lessons and Kindergarten.	Simple examples of addition, subtractions, simple multiplication tables ; notation up to 100.	Examples of addition, subtractions, multiplications, mental arithmetic, notation up to 10,000.	Four simple rules ; mental arithmetic ; notation, the whole.	Simple and compound rules ; mental arithmetic, European and native systems.

TABLE VI. 2 (contd.)

Subject	Age 5	Age 6	Age 7	Age 8	Age 9
	First year of Infant Class	Second year of Infant Class	Third year of Infant Class. 'B' Class of Lower Primary School.	Standard I : 'A' Class of Lower Primary School	Standard II : Lower Primary Class
Reading (Science Primer)	Nil	Learning letters.	Children should be able to read simple printed and written language.	Standard I, Science Primer.	Standard II, Science Primer.
Science Primer includes the following subjects :					
Botany	Nil	Nil	Nil	Simple facts about a seedling and a full-grown plant.	Lessons on the roots of plants.
Natural History	Nil	Nil	Nil	Habits and descriptions of domestic animals—cow, cat, dog.	Further lessons about the cat family.
Agriculture (country school boys only)	Nil	Nil	Nil	Necessaries of life. Varieties of crops.	Lesson on rice and oil seeds.
Physical Science (town school boys only)	Nil	Nil	Nil	Simple facts about general properties of matter.	Further discussion on properties of matter.

TABLE VI. 2 (contd.)

Subject	Age 5	Age 6	Age 7	Age 8	Age 9
	First year of Infant Class	Second year of Infant Calss	Third year of Infant Class. 'B' Class of Primary School	Standard I : 'A' Class of Lower Primary School	Standard II : Lower Primery Class
Chemistry (Town school boys only)	Nil	Nil	Nil	Solubility	Further experiments as to soluble and in-soluble substances.
Hygiene (Boys only)	Nil	Nil	Nil	Food, Drink, Air, Light	Cleanliness and dress ; exercise and rest ; epidemics.
Domestic Economy (Girls only)	Nil	Nil	Nil	Bathing ; dress ; the kitchen.	Cooking ; bed-room.
Poetry or memorizing short poems	Nil	Short pieces to be committed to memory.	Short pieces to be committed to memory.	Short pieces about duty of children to be committed to memory.	Pieces to be committed to memory.
History	Nil	Nil.	Nil	Nil	Nil
Geography	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Mensuration	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil

TABLE VI, 2 (contd.)

Subject	Age 5	Age 6	Age 7	Age 8	Age 9
	First year of Infant Class	Second year of Infant Class	Third year of Infant Class. 'B' Class of Primary School	Standard I : 'A' Class of Lower Primary School	Standard II : Lower Primary Class
Literature Book, including Grammar and Composition	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil

Source : *Education Proceedings 14-18*, October 1900, File 1E-3.

The lower primary course was now for the first time divided into five distinct classes of one year duration each. The first three classes were termed the 'infant' section and were basically to be taught by the kindergarten and object-lesson method. In the infant stage, children were to be given simple lessons about the human body and about animals, taught writing of numerals, notations and basic calculations, the learning of the alphabet and the reading of simple printed and written language, recitation of poetry and kindergarten occupations like stick-laying and seed-placing. Free-hand drawing and tracing was to be adopted throughout the entire course. The lower primary reader of the former course was now replaced by a science primer. The science primer included lessons on seven different subjects, e. g., botany, natural history, agriculture, physics, chemistry, hygiene and domestic economy.¹⁵ Domestic economy was to be studied by girls and hygiene by boys only. Agriculture was to be taught only in the village schools in place of physics and chemistry which were to be read by boys in town only. The science primer was to be taught only in Standard I and II and not in the infant section. Drill was made compulsory throughout the course to provide for outdoor physical exercise.

The strong influence exerted by the President of the Committee, Mr. Pedler, in the framing of the new curriculum is clearly evident. Having been a teacher of science, his inclinations were naturally in favour of the introduction of the various branches of science in practically all levels of school work. The new syllabus based on the principles of kindergarten and object lesson teaching placed strong emphasis on the teaching of science, hitherto untaught in the *patshalas*. In fact, the stress on the study of science was so strong that the former literary reader was now replaced by a science reader and children were expected to study their own vernacular through this medium. Arithmetic, which had always been the major focus and strong point of *patshala* education, was retained but on a reduced footing and the popular *patshala* subject of *Subhankari* (native arithmetic) was dropped from the new syllabus. The teaching

15. See Chapter VI, Appendix I, for full details of Science Primer.

of geography which had earlier been introduced in the 1890's was also now omitted from the syllabus.

The new syllabus appeared to have been designed to promote the study of science and, the kindergarten and object-lesson form of teaching, was to be used as tools for that end. Kindergarten teaching, by stimulating and activating the creative instincts of pupils, was to prepare the ground for the later introduction of the study of different science subjects. The nature of the object lessons to be given in the infant state also shows that they were intended to familiarize pupils with the basic subjects in science to be taught at a later stage in a more detailed manner. The object lessons were drawn up to initiate the pupil into the scientific world. Overall, although the number of reading pages was reduced, a wide variety of new subjects was added to the curriculum. Very little of the old *patshala* syllabus was retained and the new curriculum marked, in practical terms, a complete break from the past.¹⁶ Not only were new methods to be adopted, e. g., kindergarten and object-lesson principles, but also new subjects were introduced giving the entire educational system a new outlook.

C. Reception of the Syllabus :

The recommendations of the Committee were severely criticized by various public bodies and leading newspapers of the time as being unsuitable for Bengal.¹⁷ The critics held that the discontinuance of the teaching of Bengali Grammar would seriously retard the growth of Bengali literature and the progress of Bengali education and further accentuate the demand for English education. They also protested against the exclusion of *zamindari* and *mahajani* accounts from the new syllabus which would act contrary to the interests of the rural population by closing from them the doors of local

16. See Chapter VI, Appendix I, for full details of new curriculum.

17. Among the various public bodies to criticize the Committee's Report were British Indian Association, Bangiya Sahitya Parishad, Burdwan Teacher's Committee, etc. The newspaper criticisms appeared in *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, the *Statesman*, the *Hindoo Patriot*, *Indian Nation*.

employment as zamindar's agents, tradesmen's apprentice, etc. They severely criticised the plan of kindergarten and object-lesson system as a luxury which was unnecessary and too expensive for the finances of Bengal to bear. The utter lack of trained teachers and necessary kindergarten equipment was pointed out as major obstacles to the successful implementation of the scheme and they declared that the kindergarten system, if put into immediate effect, was foredoomed to failure.

After consideration of the criticisms, the Committee extended the course in Grammar for the upper primary and middle vernacular standards but did not include it in the lower primary course. To check the growth of tendency for English education, the Committee prescribed that English would not be used as a medium of instruction in the lower classes of secondary schools but only as a second language. The books to be used in the lower classes of high schools would all be in the vernacular and English was to be adopted as an optional subject from Standard IV upwards. The Committee put up no defence for the discontinuation of *zamindari* and *mahajani* accounts, preferring to ignore the issue altogether. However, with regard to the introduction of kindergarten methods, the Committee argued that it was the best system for infant education and could not be abandoned. The Committee proposed to keep expenses for the new scheme at a reasonable level by not implementing *in toto* Froebel's system but taking only those objects and equipments which could be easily procured in Bengal without entailing much expenditure. The Committee was against the idea of experimenting with the proposed scheme in selected schools or localities because they felt that local influences and individual interests would operate to negative the trial. Even with the poor quality of available teachers, it believed that the government should go ahead with the implementation of the new scheme because it was much superior to the older system.¹⁸ The old system was condemned as being 'an entirely mechanical system of training the memory whereby all the other faculties are dulled at the expense of monotonous parrot-like exercises'

18, *Education proceedings*, 14-18, File 1E-3, October 1900.

and it was declared that the excellence of the new system would in due time inspire even the dullest *guru* for 'bad teaching with a good educational system would produce better results than bad teaching with a bad and unsound system.'¹⁹ It was expected that teacher training would be started in accordance with the needs of the new scheme so that in two years time some trained teachers competent in the new system would become available.

With the modifications outlined above, the Committee submitted its final report on 17 April 1900 and duly received the sanction of the Government for implementation.²⁰ The new scheme came into effect in January 1901 and was intended to revolutionize Bengali school teaching by the introduction of a system under which 'children were trained but not taught.'²¹

D. Administration of the New Syllabus

The Government of India sanctioned in 1902-03 an extra grant of Rs 10,00,000 to cover the cost of the various reforms induced by the new scheme of vernacular education.²² Of this sum, about 5 lakhs (Rs 5,00,000) was assigned for primary education alone. Table VI. 3 now presents the statistics of lower primary schools and scholars between 1900-01 to 1903-04 (figures for 1904-05 not being available).

TABLE VI. 3 : LOWER PRIMARY SCHOOLS AND
SCHOLARS BETWEEN 1899-1900 TO 1903-04

	1899-1900	1900-1901	1901-02	1902-03	1903-04
School	43,809	42,003	41,612	42,870	44,248
Pupils	10,67,879	10,20,609	10,29,443	10,91,162	11,76,388

Source : Compiled from the *Reports of Public Instruction in Bengal*, 1899-1900 to 1903-04.

19. *Progress of Education in Bengal*, 1902-03 to 1906-07, p. 62.

20. *Review of Education in Bengal*, 1897-98 to 1901-02, p. 65.

21. *Progress of Education in Bengal*, 1902-03 to 1906-07, p. 62.

22. *RPIB*, 1902-03, p. 1.

The increase in schools and scholars started from 1902-03 and was possibly a result of the extra grant sanctioned from that year. Between 1900-01 to 1903-04, there was increase in both schools and scholars and the number of pupils to a school went up from 24.2 to 26.5. However, in 1903-04 Bengal still showed fewer schools than it had in 1884-85 before the impact of the weeding policy.²³ At that stage Bengal had 62,860 schools with 1,121,865 pupils. Apparently no efforts had been made to replace the weak, weeded out schools by new strong ones. The fact that the total pupil figures in 1903-04 showed a slightly higher number than in 1884-85 cannot also be taken as an indication of expansion, if the growth of population in the intervening years is taken into account. What, however, had been achieved was the increase of the total number of pupils in each school. In this category, the figures in 1903-04 showed a marked improvement having jumped from 17.8 to 26.5. The larger size of the schools indicated greater stability of these institutions than had been the case in previous years.

Table VI. 4, on the following page, now presents a comparative picture of the percentage of boys at school to boys of school-going age in the different divisions and districts of Bengal.

The progress of education was clearly not uniform, a wide degree of variation existing not only between different districts and divisions but also within districts of the same division. In every division, a wide margin separated the highest placed district from the one at the bottom. Chittagong division presented the most extreme case with the Chittagong Hill Tracts returning a figure which roughly represented one fourth of what was recorded for the district of Chittagong. Chittagong Hill Tracts' poor performance is understandable. The region is densely forested and sparsely populated by tribal people who are yet to appreciate the value of formal schooling. The table brings out clearly the striking regional

23. The weeding policy, carried out by the Bengal Government after 1884-85, was to stop the grant of aid to weak schools, e.g., those schools which had less than ten pupils enrolled and was in existence for less than six months.

TABLE VI. 4 : PERCENTAGE OF BOYS AT SCHOOL
TO BOYS OF SCHOOL-GOING AGE

	1899-1900	1900-01	1901-2	1902-03	1903-04
<i>Burdwan Division</i>					
Burdwan	47.4	40.1	41.1	40.1	41.1
Birbhum	45.3	39.5	40.0	41.4	40.7
Bankura	49.5	43.3	41.2	42.5	44.5
Midnapur	60.4	53.6	50.9	46.5	48.5
Hooghly	56.2	51.8	54.7	53.7	55.1
Howrah	56.0	47.8	48.9	52.0	59.0
Average	52.4	46.0	46.1	46.0	48.1
<i>Presidency Division</i>					
24-Parganas	46.8	41.4	41.7	45.6	48.7
Nadia	23.2	22.8	23.1	23.5	26.6
Murshidabad	26.3	24.4	23.2	24.6	24.5
Jessore	22.9	23.8	24.2	27.2	32.0
Khulna	33.4	32.5	34.2	34.1	34.6
Average	30.5	28.9	29.2	31.0	33.2
<i>Rajshahi Division</i>					
Rajshahi	18.0	17.7	18.8	18.0	20.5
Dinajpur	18.7	18.4	18.8	19.0	20.2
Jalpaiguri	20.5	17.9	17.0	19.1	22.0
Darjeeling	16.6	17.0	16.9	17.5	18.9
Rangpur	17.6	17.6	18.8	20.0	22.5
Bogra	25.5	24.2	26.2	25.2	31.1
Pabna	22.2	22.0	20.9	22.5	25.0
Average	19.8	19.2	19.6	20.1	22.8

TABLE VI. 4 (contd.)

	1899-1900	1900-01	1901-2	1902-03	1903-04
<i>Dhaka Division</i>					
Dhaka	39.9	35.1	35.1	37.6	39.6
Mymensingh	23.3	20.7	19.8	19.9	22.3
Faridpur	27.8	24.6	26.7	28.9	35.4
Barisal	51.1	45.5	45.2	44.4	45.9
Average	35.5	31.4	31.7	32.7	35.8
<i>Chittagong Division</i>					
Comilla	45.8	38.9	38.1	40.4	44.0
Noakhali	46.1	45.2	48.8	52.9	57.5
Chittagong	55.3	53.9	50.2	52.1	60.3
Chittagong Hill Tracts	12.6	11.1	13.1	14.3	15.9
Average	39.9	37.2	37.5	39.9	44.4

Source : Compiled from *Reports of Public Instruction in Bengal, 1899-1900 to 1903-04.*

differences. Northern Bengal emerges from the table as being the most depressed region educationally, and most of the North Bengal districts, e.g., Rajshahi, Dinajpur, Rangpur, Darjeeling, etc., were consistently placed near the bottom of the table (as compared to other districts of other divisions) in all five years. Burdwan division of West Bengal was the leading region in all five years and was followed closely by Chittagong division of East Bengal. In fact, overall, the honour for the most advanced region was shared almost equally between the two Western Bengal divisions of Burdwan and Presidency and the Eastern Bengal divisions of Chittagong and Dhaka. In 1903-04, Chittagong was the leading district and four of the top ten districts belonged to Eastern Bengal. This was no doubt an indication that the people of this region were certainly

prepared to take advantage of educational opportunities and could no longer be classed as educationally backward.

Since the 1880's, the Government of Bengal endeavoured to promote the use of printed books in all schools. Table VI.5 will now present statistics of pupils without access to printed books for the years 1900-01 and 1903-04.

TABLE VI. 5 : PUPILS WITHOUT ACCESS TO PRINTED BOOKS IN LOWER PRIMARY STAGE

Year	Pupils in Lower Primary Stage	Number of pupils without access to printed books	%
1899-1900	13,69,402	3,59,195	(26.2)
1903-04	14,49,975	5,29,848	(36.5)

Source : Compiled from the *Reports of Public Instruction in Bengal*, 1899-1900 and 1903-04.

What emerges from this table is that the number of pupils in schools without access to printed books increases. The drive of the 1880's to popularize the use of printed books clearly had been checked. A large number of new admissions in the infant stages no doubt swelled the number of pupils not using printed books.²⁴ The chances for the success of the new education scheme were obviously limited if more than a third of all primary pupils were yet to use books.

The introduction of the new vernacular education scheme also involved drastic changes in other branches of the educational process : the existing grant-in-aid system was altered; stricter inspection enforced; and the *guru* training scheme was revived and redesigned to adjust to the changing needs of the new system. We will discuss each of them in turn.

24. *RPIB*, 1903-04, p. 23.

Following the recommendation of the Education Commission of 1882, the system of payment by results had been generally adopted all over Bengal for the grant of aid to primary schools. However, exceptions could be made in the case of schools in backward districts or under special difficulties. As such it was the practice formerly to grant aid either in the form of fixed stipends, or by rewards based on examination held *in situ*, or by stipends combined with rewards based on examination results.

This system of payment of grants on the basis of results gained at examinations was now condemned as being uncertain in operation and tending to encourage cramming, and the Government of India urged that the results grant system be replaced by a new system in which "attendance, buildings, circumstances of the locality, teachers, nature of instruction and outlay from other sources" would be considered in assessing the grant.²⁵ Consequently, the payment by results system was by 1902-03 abolished in Bengal and replaced by a new system under which all aided schools received a monthly subsistence allowance supplemented by remuneration paid at the end of the year calculated on the basis of the following points:²⁶

- (1) pupils in regular attendance,
- (2) nature of instruction given and general character of the school,
- (3) income from fees,
- (4) condition of locality, e.g., advanced or backward. The exact rate of stipend to be given was left to be determined at the discretion of the local authorities.

In order to make the new system truly effective, it was necessary that Sub-Inspectors should examine all primary schools *in situ* so as to be able to ascertain the actual condition of these schools, judge their efficiency, and disburse payments to the *gurus* fairly and promptly. To cope with the demands of the new system, the number of Sub-Inspectors was partially increased.²⁷ This new system of

25. *Progress of Education in Bengal*, 1902-03 to 1906-07, p. 54.

26. *RPIB*, 1902-03, p. 20.

27. *RPIB*, 1903-04, p. 25.

giving grants continued to operate unchanged throughout the period under discussion.

The Lower Primary Scholarship examination continued to be held as before until 1903-04 and Table VI. 6 will now show the progress achieved as judged by the ability to pass this examination.

TABLE VI. 6 : PROGRESS OF CANDIDATES AT LOWER PRIMARY SCHOLARSHIP EXAMINATION BETWEEN 1899-1900 AND 1903-04.

Year	Total number of pupils	Number of candidates	% of candidates to total pupils	Number of passed candidates	% of passed candidates
1899-1900	10,67,879	47,436	4.4	28,892	60.9
1900-01	10,20,609	46,893	4.5	30,715	65.5
1901-02	10,29,443	67,831	6.5	45,051	66.4
1902-03	10,91,162	66,734	6.1	40,753	61.0
1903-04	11,76,388	73,605	6.2	46,096	62.6

Source : Compiled from the *Reports of Public Instruction in Bengal*, 1899-1900 to 1903-04.

Although both the number of participating candidates and passed candidates had increased, yet it is clear from the table that the performance of the candidates varied considerably between different years. The lower primary scholarship examination was the highest standard that the lower primary pupils could hope to attain and all pupils sitting for the exam were certainly more accomplished and better grounded in reading, writing, and arithmetic than those pupils who were not sent up for the exam. Between 1899-1900 and 1903-04, both the number of competing candidates as well as passed candidates had gone up suggesting, thereby, that some progress had been made in this direction. The other observation that can be made on the table is that the number of successful candidates began to

decline after 1901-02, the year of the implementation of the new education scheme. The new syllabus, as we have seen, considerably enhanced the primary standard, and it is probable that this raising of the standard was reflected in the lower primary scholarship examination of some areas adversely affecting the number of successful candidates. However, until 1903-04, the lower primary examination was conducted on the basis of the old course and none of the Inspector's reports give any indication of pupils being examined under the new course.

The lower primary examination was abolished after 1903-04 and a new system of awarding scholarships was adopted which stipulated that scholarships would be given to pupils of lower primary schools provided that such schools followed the new course prescribed in 1901. The distribution of the scholarship was to be restricted to the police jurisdictions of the districts. The Sub-Inspector of schools would select one pupil from each school in the area, care being taken to ensure that the total number of selected candidates for any one police jurisdiction did not exceed three times the number of scholarships allotted to that area. These candidates would then be examined, mainly orally, by the District Board authorities at the headquarters of the police jurisdiction and scholarships would accordingly be distributed among successful candidates. The value of the scholarship was fixed at Rs 2 per month and each scholarship was tenable for a period of two years in any upper primary, middle or high school subscribing to the prescribed curriculum. Unfortunately, until 1906-07, no information was made available by the Divisional Inspectors regarding the actual working of the new system and hence, we are not in a position to comment on whether the new scheme worked successfully.²⁸

The framers of the new vernacular education scheme of 1901 had pointed out at the outset that three necessary preliminaries would have to be fulfilled for the success of the scheme :

1. teacher training would have to be provided to ensure the avai-

28. This para is based on information given in *Progress of Education in Bengal, 1902-03 to 1906-07*, p. 57.

lability of qualified teachers competent to instruct in the new system ;

2. Inspecting Pundits, Sub-Inspectors and Deputy Inspectors would have to be made familiar with the new methods of teaching adopted ; and.

3. preparation of manuals spelling out clear guidelines would also have to be supplied.²⁹ Accordingly, with the implementation of the new scheme, measures were chalked out to fulfil the above points.

Guru training schools, which had been considered unnecessary and abolished in 1897, were revived in 1902 and remodelled on account of the new education scheme. It was now laid down that a *guru*-training school would be started in every sub-division. The site of the school would be a village which did not possess any primary school but was centrally-located so as to be accessible to other villages in the area having primary schools. The school to be erected was to be of a temporary character, the idea being that after the teachers of the neighbourhood had been trained, the school would be moved on to another area, and the building thus vacated would then be utilised for the purpose of a primary school.³⁰ The *guru* training schools were to be staffed by two teachers, a head-master (preferably a holder of the Vernacular Mastership Certificate) and an assistant master. *Gurus* entering the school after passing only lower primary examination would have their general education raised to the Upper Primary standard, and those who had the Upper Primary Certificate would be advanced to the Middle school standard. The duration of the course would normally be for two years, exception being made for *gurus* who had already crossed the Middle vernacular stage for whom a one year course was considered sufficient. The normal intake of *gurus* in each training school was limited to ten. Two types of *gurus* were admitted to these schools. Those who gave up their work as a teacher to join these schools were granted a stipend of Rs 3 per month during the period of training. Those who were not willing to give up their own *patshalas* were allowed to continue teaching in them and come to the training school

29. *Education Proceedings*, 23-26, File 9A-1, September 1899.

30. *RPB*, 1905-06, p. 27.

daily for an hour's instruction but they received no stipends. After completion of training, certificates were to be issued by the Deputy Inspector of the district on the basis of an *in situ* examination.

Under the revised standards, the pupils in the training schools were to be taught so as to be able to acquire a sound knowledge of the theory and practice of teaching and school management.³¹ A look at the Teacher's Manual prepared for lower primary standard will show the changed bias of the curriculum.

TABLE VI. 7 : TEACHER'S MANUAL FOR THE LOWER
PRIMARY STANDARD (200 PAGES)

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1. Introduction—A short and simple statement of the principles of the kindergarten method of training young children (10 pages).
 2. The kindergarten occupations and action songs (8 pages).
 3. The requirements of the syllabus for the Infant and Lower Primary Standards of vernacular education (10 pages).
 4. The schoolroom and arrangement of children (3 pages).
 5. Methods of giving lessons on particular subjects ; full notes of lessons containing detailed instructions as to how to give lessons on form, colour, writing, reading, arithmetic, etc., so that the pupils might thoroughly learn the subjects taught, and that at the same time their senses might be trained, and their power of expression and all the faculties—physical, mental, and moral—be duly developed (162 pages).
 6. Qualifications and duties of a good teacher, and his conduct towards his pupils ; punctuality and discipline ; corporal punishment (6 pages).
-

Source : *Education Proceedings*, 23-26, File 9A-1, September 1899.

In the past, class management and theory and practice of teaching had occupied a sub-ordinate position in the curriculum of the *guru* training schools. But now the course of study was reorg-

31. *RPIB*. 1900-01, p. 22.

anized so as to facilitate efficient teaching of the new vernacular course. Accordingly, provision was made for the proper teaching of Kindergarten and Object lessons and other requirements of the new lower primary syllabus. The Teacher's Manual was concerned basically with the work to be done by the school master, the nature of the subjects to be taught and the precise method by which the instruction should be imparted.³²

The new scheme of teacher training continued unchanged till the end of 1905. The Reports of Public Instruction do not give statistics of the distribution of trained teachers in the different divisions of Bengal and as such we cannot assess the impact of the scheme in the different regions. That the scheme had very limited success overall is indicated by the fact that in 1901-02 the number of trained teachers returned for Bengal was 4.0%³³ and by 1907 only 5.6% were classified as trained.³⁴ Not only were the vast majority of teachers untrained but what was equally alarming was the fact that a good section of trained teachers did not revert to teaching after training but opted for other jobs. Thus, in 1910 (the first year for which figures are available), of 1,325 *gurus* passing out successfully from training schools, only 585 joined the teaching profession and the remainder sought other jobs.³⁵ This meant that approximately 44 percent of trained *gurus* returned to teaching while the majority elected to do something different. Apparently, even as late as 1910, the remuneration of teachers was not sufficiently attractive, and as before, most teachers continued to keep their eyes open for more lucrative employment.

The *guru* training schools faced severe criticism on two main grounds: first it was pointed out that it was not possible for a *guru* to manage his own *patshala* and then receive proper training by attending training school for one hour daily; and secondly, the

32. *Education Proceedings*, 23-26, File 9A-1, Sept. 1899.

33. *Progress of Education in India: Fourth Quinquennial Review*, 1897-98 to 1901-02, p. 617.

34. Stark, p. 412.

35. *Ibid.*, p. 413.

temporary character of schools prevented the introduction of permanent improvements such as hostels for students and quarters for teachers.³⁶ Accordingly, changes were introduced after 1905 on the basis of recommendations of a special committee. Stipends of the *guru* pupils were now raised to rates varying from Rs 5 to Rs 10 according to local requirements; 96 new schools were opened; improvements and repairs were made on existing *guru* training schools; and rewards were given to those who passed the training school with credit.³⁷

Not only were *guru* training schools revived following the adoption of the new vernacular education scheme, but also for the first time now Sub-Inspectors of schools and Inspecting Pundits were required to attend first-grade training schools for about six weeks to get familiar with the working of the new system. With the help of knowledge thus gained, they were expected to be able to teach untrained *gurus* on how best to reorganize their schools in accordance with the new method.³⁸

Despite the provision of training for Sub-Inspectors, Inspecting Pundits, and *gurus*, and the preparation of teacher's manuals, the new scheme of vernacular education was not destined to achieve much success. The main instrument for the successful working of the scheme was the *gurus* and they remained practically as ignorant of modern methods as before. Roughly 95 percent of lower primary teachers remained untrained by 1905 and could hardly be expected to teach efficiently the kindergarten, object-lesson, and other subjects stipulated in the new curriculum.

In its actual working, the new scheme of vernacular education was a failure and the new system as tried in the schools of Bengal was about as far removed from the principles of Froebel as was the system which it supplanted.³⁹ The course of study prescribed under the new scheme was too long, too varied, and too advanced for rural

36. *Ibid.*, p. 411.

37. *Progress of Education in Bengal, 1902-03 to 1906-07*, p. 63.

38. Stark, p. 389.

39. *Progress of Education in Bengal, 1902-03 to 1906-07*, p. 63.

schools and hence became unpopular.⁴⁰ Not only were teachers poorly qualified to teach the new course but their work load was also increased without adequate compensation. The new scheme divided lower primary schools into distinct classes, each with its own separate course of lessons and despite occasional help from monitors, the actual load of work was more than one teacher could perform efficiently.⁴¹

But the strongest criticism of the scheme was that it placed too much stress on the teaching of science. It was pointed out that children of the age for whom the lower primary course was intended "were incapable of learning science, for generalizing from facts belonged to a later stage of mental discipline, and instruction with this aim could only be given, if the power of intelligent and accurate observation had been first developed."⁴² Moreover, under the scheme, children were introduced to the study of their own language not through a literary reader but through the medium of a science primer. The working of this arrangement was not successful and is thus described by Mr. Kuchler (Inspector of Schools, Bhagalpur Division) :

"This subject [science] not only occupies a quite disproportionate place in the syllabus but children are actually expected to make their first acquaintance with their own vernacular through the medium of science readers, these being the books prescribed for lessons in reading up to the end of standard II. There is a certain amount of ingenuity shown in this attempt to kill two birds with one stone, but the result is that the mark is missed in both cases."⁴³

Unable to comprehend fully the wide variety of scientific subjects taught, pupils resorted to the old art of memorization as the easy way out. Children, who previously memorized the class reader, were now perfectly content to memorize the science primer and hence

40. Stark, p. 389.

41. *Ibid.*, p. 391.

42. *RPIB*, 1905-06, p. 23.

43. *Progress of Education in Bengal*, 1902-03 to 1906-07, p. 64.

defeated the very object for which the new vernacular education scheme was launched. The net result of the excessive stress on the science primer was a return to rote teaching and mechanical learning, that is to say, teaching from treatises *about* objects and not *from* objects.⁴⁴

E. Revision of the New Syllabus

Following the criticism of the new syllabus and the declaration of the Government of India that "the main aim of rural schools should be not to impart definite agricultural teaching, but to give the children a preliminary training which will make them intelligent cultivators...the reading books prescribed should be written in simple language and should deal with topics associated with rural life" (Government of India Resolution, 11th March 1904, paragraph 21), the Lt-Governor of Bengal, Sir Andrew Fraser, appointed a committee to enquire into the working of the Vernacular scheme of 1901. The Committee recommended that the science primer, which was much too advanced for the children prescribed, be abolished and replaced by a Primer to be written in easy language containing small interesting stories, scenes of rural life, popular episodes of English and Indian history, etc., all actively illustrated for the easy understanding of the children. Geography, which had been dropped in the syllabus of 1901, was to be reintroduced in Standard II. The Committee also proposed to lighten the teacher's burden by reducing the number of infant classes from three to two, the first for infants aged from 5-7 years and the second for those aged 6-8.⁴⁵

As can be seen, the Committee did not suggest the abandonment of kindergarten principles. Its main target of attack was the Science Primer which it wanted to abolish altogether. Science was not to be included as a subject of study in the new Primer proposed. However, it was proposed that provision would be made in the Junior Teacher's Manual for teaching the children how to observe natural

44. *RPIB*, 1905-06, p. 23.

45. *Ibid.*, pp. 23-24.

phenomena to prepare them for the eventual study of scientific subjects in the higher standards.⁴⁶ The revised syllabus, as proposed by the Committee, was published in 1907, and was in full working in lower primary schools by 1910.⁴⁷

To sum up, the years 1899 to 1905 were a critical period in the educational history of Bengal. It was a period in which, for the first time, efforts were made to completely supplant the old *Patshala* system. This was a logical move stemming from the earlier government plan of extending control over *patshalas*. The previous policy of experimenting with *patshalas* was now set aside and the decision was taken to shift the model for Bengali elementary education from *patshala* to school on the European model. The new policy involved revolutionary changes and affected all branches of elementary education—the teachers, pupils, and the entire educational process itself.

The educational structure was completely changed both in respect of subjects and methods of teaching. The old *patshala* subjects were cast aside and replaced by a variety of new ones. Kindergarten and object lesson principles were introduced as the best form of teaching. The lower primary course was divided into distinct classes with specific course and fixed time-table. The new syllabus made no attempt to retain popular indigenous characteristics. It implied a complete break with the past and laid down regulations for the development of elementary education on new lines. It now proposed to start an educational system where the objective would be to promote 'learning as understanding' on the part of pupils. Thus, unlike *patshala* education, the new learning would involved both acquisition of skills and acquisition of knowledge (abstract knowledge).

The changeover to the European school model had severe consequences for the old traditional *gurus*. Their position had been considerably undermined ever since the government campaign of

46. *RIPB*, 1909-10, pp. 20-21.

47. Stark, p. 389.

extending control had started. But this was the final straw. The withdrawal of old *Patshala* subjects like *zamindari/mahajani* accounts from the syllabus made the old *gurus* valueless in the eyes of the Department. The patronage formerly extended was no longer necessary as it became evident to the Department that a new class of *gurus* would have to be raised to teach the new course efficiently. Consequently, the old *gurus* and their traditional *patshalas* were all but ruined as the government stepped up its machinery to popularize the new system of education.

To facilitate the practical introduction of the new scheme of vernacular education in primary and secondary schools, the Government of India sanctioned in 1902-03, an extra grant of Rs 10,00,000 of which Rs 5,00,000 was to be devoted for primary education. The additional grant did not witness a commensurate level of expansion in the number of pupils and was used more for the appointment of additional Sub-Inspectors of schools, supply of kindergarten appliances and for the change of method of aid from payment by results to a stipendiary system modified by the results of systematic inspection.⁴⁸ The adoption of payment by results system had earlier resulted in the rapid expansion of both schools and scholars in the 1870's and 1880's. That payment by results system was now dropped can be taken as an indication that the priority of the government had shifted from expansion to improvement.

The framers of the new scheme were aware that the poor qualifications of the *gurus* would be a major obstacle for the success of the scheme but they felt that with proper training the situation could be overcome. This was not to be. Although the *guru* training scheme was revived and remodelled, by 1905 only about 5 percent of all *gurus* were classified as trained. This meant that only one out of every twenty *gurus* was properly qualified to teach efficiently the new course. Clearly the *gurus* themselves were in desperate need of training and could hardly be expected to teach children what they themselves did not know. Moreover, 35 percent of the pupils

48. *RPIB*, 1902-03, pp. 1-2.

were not even used to reading printed books and would not certainly be able to follow the new course effectively.

Finally, the main justification for the launching of the new scheme was that the old *patshala* teaching tended to encourage memorizing. It was declared that the new scheme would aim more to develop the minds of boys than to strengthen their memories. However, in this object, too, the scheme failed. The *patshala* pupils, unused to the new methods of teaching and unable to comprehend the wide variety of subjects, still continued to base their studying on the old art of memorization. The only difference was that instead of memorizing their old Reader, they were now memorizing the new Science Primer. Despite all the good intentions, the new scheme was clearly premature and too hastily introduced. It tried to do too much too quickly and was doomed to failure.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

Until the middle of the nineteenth century, the Bengal Government did not see the education of the masses as being its responsibility and left its development in the hands of private agencies. As such, until 1854, *patshalas* operated in their traditional manner. Undisturbed by official intervention, they catered to local needs as they always had done. But this situation changed with the promulgation of Wood's despatch of 1854 which specifically called for efforts to be made to promote the education of the lower classes. The British policy in Bengal then became to develop a system of elementary education based on Bengal's existing network of indigenous schools. This policy was dictated mainly by economic considerations rather than by any genuine appreciation of the indigenous system of education.

The involvement of the government with the *patshalas* soon led to the adoption of measures aimed at redesigning the traditional education system. The free, informal atmosphere of the *patshalas* did not appeal to the government. It did not see much value in an educational system where books were not in use, where there was no school calendar, no fixed routine, and no defined method of discipline. Consequently, as the government extended its control over *patshalas*, it inevitably attempted to induce changes in line with its own ideas of schooling.

The government control of *patshalas* was achieved mainly by the use of grants-in-aid. *Patshalas* submitting to government regulation and supervision would receive a government grant. In those days, where the average *guru* had a precarious existence, the possibilities of an extra income often proved a powerful inducement and many

took up the government offer and accepted government directions in return for a grant. Initially, grants were given mainly to the *gurus* but soon scholarships were instituted for the benefit of pupils as well. This new scholarship system brought new local pressure on the *gurus* to submit to government control because the parents of pupils now wanted them to qualify for the scholarships.

Apart from popularising the use of printed books, the government also attempted various other reforms in the *patshalas* they controlled. They tried to introduce the maintenance of regular attendance registers ; new types of class-routine ; fixed timing of beginning and ending of daily school sessions ; and the proper arrangement of classes. The traditional *patshala* curriculum was modified. The institution of scholarships, the standardisation of examination procedures ; and new forms of teacher training were all seen as providing for more effective teaching along the lines which the government wanted.

These changes led, in practical terms, to the development of two differing forms of vernacular elementary schooling in Bengal ; firstly the traditional *patshala* (now identified with the unaided *patshalas*) ; and secondly the new 'Departmental' *patshala* influenced by principles of European schooling, i.e., *patshalas* which had been changed to conform to a more European school pattern.

From 1854 to 1900, change in 'departmental' *patshalas* were essentially a compromise ; a compromise between traditional *patshala* principles—which looked to the limited objective of the imparting of practical skills—and modern European schooling—which expected to both impart skills and to transmit 'knowledge'. The new *patshala* thus retained some traditional *patshala* characteristics and introduced some features of European schooling. In 1901, however, this compromise view was set aside, and a new scheme of schooling was drawn up which was based entirely on European principles. The introduction of the new vernacular education scheme of 1901 was the logical conclusion of the government's drive to change *patshalas* into schools on the European model. The adoption of kindergarten teaching marked a complete break with the past.

It involved teaching methods which had never before been tried in Bengal but were then popularly in use in the elementary schools of Europe. Under the new kindergarten syllabus, the old (and popular) *patshala* subjects were dropped and replaced by new subjects geared mainly towards scientific teaching. Thus, the attempt was made to strip the *patshalas* of their traditional characteristics and convert them into 'modern' schools. This attempt had very limited success but the nature of the change contemplated was significant.

The Bengal government had started out with the idea of extending a helping hand to the indigenous *patshalas*. But, by the end of the century, it ended up by practically superseding the *patshala* system by a new kind of elementary education. The rigid official control exercised over the *patshalas* had severe ramifications for the *gurus*, pupils, and the entire educational process itself. The older, traditional, *gurus* were gradually replaced by a new generation of teachers who were less conservative and more prepared to experiment with new methods; and, in effect, more amenable to government control. The changes in curriculum and teaching methodology which this shift involved were oriented more in favour of the better-off sections of the community than the very poor. By converting *patshalas* into schools, the government took away those very characteristics which had helped to make them (*patshalas*) popular amongst the masses. The government-recognized *patshalas* received the general support of the better-off classes of the community who saw in them a means to go on to higher education. Consequently, the patronage which these classes had formerly extended to the traditional *patshalas* was withdrawn and diverted to the government-recognized *patshalas*. This naturally hit hard the unaided *patshalas* and those *gurus* unwilling or unable to secure government recognition. As Bhudev Mukherjee reported in the 1860's :

"the peculiar circumstances of the country had for a long time past created a diversity of interest, so to say in educational matters, between the well-to-do and the lower classes of the community, the supervision which the better classes alone are competent to exercise over educational establish-

ments had been in a great measure withdrawn from the *patshalas*. The remuneration of the teachers of these institutions had also fallen off with the interest of those who had the means to pay adequately, and an inferior set of men accordingly came to occupy the once honourable post of *gurumohashoy*.¹

By the early twentieth century, government intervention at the level of elementary education had effectively undermined the traditional *patshala* system. Some *patshalas* continued to operate on traditional lines; but, these were those which had not received, or which had stayed away from, the government system and, hence, from government support. And such unaided, unrecognized *patshalas* were struggling to maintain themselves, starved of resources either from the government or, in many cases, from the local community. Those *patshalas* which had opted for recognition by the government and which received support were increasingly working on new or 'modern' lines: they had a new cadre of *gurus* who followed a new curriculum, used new kinds of instruction and discipline—and effectively allowed themselves to be controlled by the administration. The rural communities of Bengal had thus, by the beginning of the twentieth century, seen the start of the transformation of their traditional form of elementary education. The new forms of elementary education also significantly changed the access of rural groups to elementary education. The new *patshalas* were increasingly the preserve of the better-off / well-to-do / higher status peasantry; the poor and less privileged had lost or had less access to this small avenue of instruction. Colonial Bengal's educational under-development—the results of which would be reaped by the people of Bangladesh and of West Bengal in the later twentieth century—was assured.

1. Cited in E. L. Harrison, 'The Midnapur System of Primary Education', *Calcutta Review*, Vol. 63, 1876, p. 128.

CHAPTER II

APPENDIX A

DIFFERENT CASTES OF HINDU TEACHERS

District of Murshidabad :

Brahman	...	14	Suvarnabanik	...	1
Kayastha	...	39	Kshatriya	...	1
Aguri	...	3	Chhatri	...	1
Sunri	...	2	Sadgop	...	1
Kaivarta	...	2	Chandal	...	1
Vaidya	...	1			

District of Birbhum :

Brahman	...	86	Mayra	...	4	Swarnakar	...	1
Kayastha	...	256	Goala	...	3	Rajput	...	1
Sadgop	...	12	Vaidya	...	2	Napit	...	1
Vaishnava	...	8	Aguri	...	2	Barayi	...	1
Gandhabanik	...	5	Yugi	...	2	Chhatri	...	1
Suvarnabanik	...	5	Tanti	...	2	Dhoba	...	1
Bhatta	...	4	Kalu	...	2	Malo	...	1
Kaivarta	...	4	Sunri	...	2	Chandal	...	1

District of Burdwan :

Brahman	...	107	Gandhabanik	...	6	Bagdhi	...	2	Kamar	...	1
Kayastha	...	369	Kaivarta	...	5	Naga	...	1	Mayra	...	1
Sadgop	...	50	Chandal	...	4	Tanti	...	1	Dhoba	...	1
Aguri	...	30	Kumar	...	3	Daivajna	...	1	Rajput	...	1
Vaishnava	...	13	Napit	...	3	Vaidya	...	1	Kalu	...	1
Teli	...	10	Suvarnabanik	...	2	Yugi	...	1	Sunri	...	1
Bhatta	...	9	Goala	...	2	Barayi	...	1			

Source : W. Adam, *Reports on the State of Education in Bengal, 1835-1838*, ed., Anathnath Basu, Calcutta ; University of Calcutta, 1941, pp. 228, 234, 239.

CHAPTER II

APPENDIX B

DIFFERENT CASTES OF HINDU PUPILS

District of Murshidabad :

Brahman	... 181	Goala	... 19	Tili	... 6	Khaar	... 2
Kayastha	... 129	Mala	... 16	Aguri	... 5	Jalia	... 2
Kaivarta	... 96	Napit	... 75	Luniar	... 5	Lahari	... 2
Suvarnabanik	... 62	Vaidya	... 14	Halwaikar	... 4	Bagdhi	... 2
Gandhabanik	... 59	Sutar	... 13	Barayi	... 4	Vaisya	... 1
Tanti	... 56	Osawal	... 12	Mali	... 4	Kalu	... 1
Sunri	... 39	Swarnakar	11	Daibajna	... 4	Pashi	... 1
Teli	... 36	Yugi	... 10	Chandal	... 4	Gareri	... 1
Mayra	... 29	Chhatri	... 9	Gaurbanik	3	Dhoba	... 1
Kshatriya	... 26	Kamar	... 9	Kandu	... 3	Kairi	... 1
Kurmi	... 24	Kumar	... 8	Kalawar	... 3	Muchi	... 1
Vaishnava	... 24	Rajput	... 7	Kayali	... 3		
Tamli	... 22	Kansyabanik	7	Sadgop	... 2		

District of Birbhum :

Brahman	... 1,853	Vaishnava	... 161	Hari	... 13
Goala	... 560	Tamil	... 127	Mal	... 12
Gandhabanik	... 529	Kamar	... 109	Vaishya	... 11
Kayastha	... 487	Kaivarta	... 89	Sankhabanik	9
Sadgop	... 290	Napit	... 79	Kansyabanik	9
Kalu	... 258	Vaidya	... 71	Bhatta	... 9
Mayra	... 248	Rajput	... 68	Yugi	... 9
Tanti	... 196	Barayi	... 62	Net	... 8
Suvarnabanik	... 184	Bagdhi	... 14	Sarak	... 7
Sunri	... 164	Baiti	... 13	Kurmi	... 7

District of Birbhum (contd.) :

Lahari	...	5	Tili	...	35	Agradani	...	1
Mal	...	4	Aguri	...	28	Magadha	...	1
Bahila	...	4	Dhoba	...	28	Sanyasi	...	1
Muchi	...	3	Chhatri	...	24	Halwaikar	...	1
Bhumiya	...	2	Punra	...	23	Bauri	...	1
Dhanuk	...	2	Dom	...	23	Dulia	...	1
Swarnakar	...	53	Daivajna	...	17	Jalia	...	1
Kshatriya	...	52	Keot	...	15	Byadha	...	1
Sutar	...	50	Konra	...	2	Chandal	...	1
Kumar	...	43	Ganrar	...	2			
Teli	...	38	Matiya	...	2			

District of Burdwan :

Brahman	...	3,429	Tili	...	200	Kansyabanik	...	34
Kayastha	...	1,846	Napit	...	192	Daivajna	...	33
Sadgop	...	1,254	Vaishnava	...	189	Barayi	...	32
Aguri	...	787	Sunri	...	188	Jaliya	...	28
Gandhabanik	...	606	Kshatriya	...	161	Sankhabanik	...	27
Teli	...	371	Bagdhi	...	138	Mali	...	26
Goala	...	311	Yugi	...	131	Dhoba	...	24
Mayra	...	281	Vaidya	...	125	Rajput	...	21
Kamar	...	262	Sutar	...	108	Baiti	...	16
Suvarnabanik	...	261	Kumar	...	95	Muchi	...	16
Tanti	...	249	Swarnakar	...	81	Bhatta	...	11
Tamil	...	242	Dom	...	61	Hari	...	11
Kaivarta	...	223	Chandal	...	61	Agradani	...	8
Kalu	...	207	Chhatri	...	35	Kurmi	...	8
Tior	...	4	Garar	...	2	Kandu	...	1
Kunyar	...	3	Kahar	...	2	Matiya	...	1
Lahari	...	3	Mal	...	2	Pashi	...	1

Source : W. Adam, *Reports on the State of Education in Bengal (1835 and 1838)*, ed. A. Basu, Calcutta, University of Calcutta, 1941, pp. 231, 236-237, 241.

CHAPTER IV

APPENDIX A

PRIMARY-SCHOLARSHIP RULES (1872)

Each district will be allowed at once the number of scholarships per annum shown in the annexed list, to be distributed to the *patshalas* or primary schools aided and unaided. The number of these scholarships will be increased when *patshalas* are well established under the new rules.

Boys at any school which receives a *Patshala* grant, or at any other primary school of the lowest class, will be eligible for primary scholarships. Not more than one scholarship may be granted in any one year to one school. No boy above the age of fourteen years will be eligible for a primary scholarship.

Primary scholarships will be at the rate of Rs 3 a month, and will be tenable for two years at any middle class English, or at any vernacular school, or at any special or normal school. No scholarship can be withdrawn from its holder for misconduct, or for any other cause, without the sanction of the district committee.

Primary scholarships may be granted as the district committee may determine, either on the recommendation of the Inspector, or on the report of the Deputy Inspector after his half-yearly inspection, or on the results of examination held at sub-divisional centres. No examination fee is to be charged to candidates for primary scholarships.

The only subjects which shall count for primary scholarships are—Reading and writing the vernacular of the district.

Arithmetic, written and mental.

Bazaar and *zamindari* accounts, and simple mensuration.

*LIST OF PATSHALA OR PRIMARY
SCHOLARSHIPS*

Hooghly and Howrah	...	12
Burdwan	...	15
Midnapur	...	20
Birbhum	...	4
Bankura	...	4
Murshidabad	...	10
24-Pargana	...	13
Jessore	...	15
Nadia	...	12
Dinajpur	...	8
Malda	...	4
Rajshahi	...	10
Rangpur	...	12
Bogra	...	4
Pabna	...	7
Jalpaiguri	...	4
Darjeeling	...	2
Dhaka	...	13
Faridpur	...	8
Barisal	...	12
Mymensingh	...	12
Sylhet	...	10
Cachar	...	2
Chittagong	...	7
Tippera	...	8
Noakhali	...	5

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The total number of scholarships allotted was 410, but the remaining refer to districts outside Bengal proper and have, therefore, not been included in this list.

Source : *Education Proceedings*, No. 115, November 1872.

CHAPTER V

APPENDIX A

The following recommendations were made by the Education Commission with regard to indigenous education :

- 1) That an indigenous school be defined as one established or conducted by natives of India on native methods.
- 2) That all indigenous schools, whether high or low, be recognized and encouraged, if they serve any purpose of secular education whatsoever.
- 3) That the best practicable method of encouraging indigenous schools of a high order, and desiring recognition, be ascertained by the Education Departments in communication with Pundits, Maulvis, and others interested in the subject.
- 4) That preference be given to that system which regulates the aid given mainly according to the results of examinations.
- 5) That special encouragement be afforded to indigenous school masters to undergo training, and to bring their relatives and probable successors under regular training.
- 6) That a steady and gradual improvement in indigenous schools be aimed at, with as little immediate interference with their personnel or curriculum as possible.
- 7) That the standards of examination be arranged to suit each Province, with the view of preserving all that is valued by the people in the indigenous systems, and of encouraging by special grants the gradual introduction of useful subjects of instruction.
- 8) That indigenous schools receiving aid be inspected *in situ*, and, as far as possible the examination for their grants-in-aid be conducted *in situ*.

- 9) That aided indigenous schools, not registered as special schools, be understood to be open to all classes and castes of the community, specially aid being, if necessary, assignable on account of low-caste pupils.
- 10) That such a proportion between special and other elementary indigenous schools be maintained in each town and District, as to ensure a proportionate provision for the education of all classes.
- 11) That where Municipal and Local Boards exist, the registration supervision, and encouragement of indigenous elementary schools, whether aided or unaided, be entrusted to such boards ; provided that boards shall not interfere in any way with such schools as do not desire to receive aid, or to be subject to the supervision of the boards.
- 12) That the aid given to elementary indigenous schools be a charge against the funds at the disposal of Local and Municipal boards where such exist ; and every indigenous school, which is registered for aid, receive from such boards the aid to which it is entitled under the rules.
- 13) That such boards be required to give elementary indigenous schools free play and development, and to establish fresh schools of their own only where the preferable alternative of aiding suitable indigenous schools cannot be adopted.
- 14) That the local inspecting officers be ex-officio members of Municipal or District school boards.
- 15) That the officers of the Education Dept. keep lists of all elementary indigenous schools, and assist the boards in selecting schools to be registered for aid, and in securing a proportionate provision of education for all classes of the community.

Source : *Indian Education Commission Report*, 1882, pp. 585-586.

CHAPTER V

APPENDIX B

The following recommendations were made by the Education Commission with regard to primary education :

- 1) That primary education be regarded as the instruction of the masses through the vernacular in such subjects as will best fit them for their position in life, and be not necessarily regarded as a portion of instruction leading up to the University.
- 2) That the upper primary and lower primary examinations be not made compulsory in any province.
- 3) That while every branch of education can justly claim the fostering care of the State, it is desirable, in the present circumstances of the country, to declare the elementary education of the masses, its provision, extension, and improvement, to be that part of the educational system to which the strenuous efforts of the State should now be directed in a still larger measure than heretofore.
- 4) That an attempt be made to secure the fullest possible provision for, and extension of, primary education by legislation suited to the circumstances of each Province.
- 5) That where indigenous schools exist, the principle of aiding and improving them be recognized as an important means of extending elementary education.
- 6) That examinations by inspecting officers be conducted as far as possible *in situ*, and all primary schools receiving aid be invariably inspected *in situ*.
- 7) That, as a general rule, aid to primary schools be regulated to a large extent according to the results of examination ; but an

- exception may be made in the case of schools established in back-ward Districts or under peculiar circumstances, which may be aided under special rules.
- 8) That school-houses and furniture be of the simplest and most economical kind.
 - 9) That the standards of primary examinations in each Province be revised with a view to simplification, and to the larger introduction of practical subjects, such as native methods of arithmetic, accounts and mensuration, the elements of natural and physical science, and their application to agriculture, health, and the industrial arts ; but that no attempt be made to secure general uniformity throughout India.
 - 10) That care be taken not to interfere with the freedom of managers of aided schools in the choice of text-books.
 - 11) That promotion from class to class be not necessarily made to depend on the results of one fixed standard of examinations uniform throughout the Province.
 - 12) That physical development be promoted by the encouragement of native games, gymnastics, school-drill, and other exercises suited to the circumstances of each class of school.
 - 13) That all inspecting officers and teachers be directed to see that the teaching and discipline of every school are such as to exert a right influence on the manners, the conduct, and the character of the children, and that, for the guidance of the masters, a special manual be prepared.
 - 14) That the existing rules, as to religious teaching in Govt. schools, be applied to all primary schools wholly maintained by Municipal or Local Fund Boards.
 - 15) That the supply of Normal Schools, whether Govt. or aided, be so localised as to provide for the local requirements of all primary schools, whether Govt. or aided, within the Division under each Inspector.
 - 16) That the first charges on Provincial Funds assigned for primary education be the cost of its direction and inspection, and the provision of adequate Normal schools.

- 17) That pupils in Municipal or Local board-schools be not entirely exempted from payment of fees, merely on the ground that they are the children of rate-payers.
- 18) That in all board schools, a certain proportion of pupils be admissible as free students on the ground of poverty ; and in the case of special schools, established for the benefit of poorer classes, a general or larger exemption from payment of fees be allowed under proper authority for special reasons.
- 19) That, subject to the exemption of a certain proportion of free students on account of poverty, fees, whether in money or kind, be levied in all aided schools ; but the proceeds be left entirely at the disposal of the school managers.
- 20) That the principle laid down in Lord Hardinge's Resolution, dated 11th October 1844, be re-affirmed, i.e., that in selecting persons to fill the lowest offices under Government, preference be always given to candidates who can read and write.
- 21) That night schools be encouraged wherever practicable.
- 22) That as much elasticity as possible be permitted both as regards the hour of the day and the seasons of the year during which the attendance of scholars is required, especially in agricultural villages and in backward districts.
- 23) That primary education be extended in backward districts, especially in those inhabited mainly by aboriginal races...
- 24) That all primary schools wholly maintained at the cost of the school boards, and all primary schools that are aided from the same fund and are not registered as special schools, be understood to be open to all castes and classes of the community.
- 25) That such a proportion between special and other primary schools be maintained in each school-district as to ensure a proportionate provision for the education of all castes.
- 26) That assistance be given to schools and orphanages in which poor children are taught reading, writing, and counting with or without manual work.

- 27) That primary education be declared to be that part of the whole system of Public Instruction, which possesses an almost exclusive claim on local funds set apart for education, and a large claim on provincial revenues.
- 28) That both Municipal and Local Boards keep a separate school fund.
- 29) That the Municipal school-fund consist of :
 - (a) a fair proportion of Municipal revenues, to be fixed in each case by the Local Govt. ;
 - (b) the fees levied in schools wholly maintained at the cost of the Municipal school-fund ;
 - (c) any assignment that may be made to the Municipal school-fund from the Local fund ;
 - (d) any assignment from Provincial Funds ;
 - (e) any other funds that may be entrusted to the Municipalities for the promotion of education ;
 - (f) any unexpended balance of the school-fund from previous years.
- 30) That the Local board's school-fund consist of :
 - (a) a distinct share of the general local fund, which share shall not be less than a minimum proportion to be prescribed for each Province ;
 - (b) the fees levied in schools wholly maintained at the cost of the school fund ;
 - (c) any contribution that may be assigned by Municipal Boards ;
 - (d) any assignment made from Provincial Funds ;
 - (e) any other funds that may be entrusted to the Local Boards for the promotion of education ;
 - (f) any unexpended balance of the school fund from previous years.
- 31) That the general control over primary school-expenditure be vested in the school-boards, whether Municipal or Local, which may now exist or may hereafter be created for self-government in each Province.

- 32) That the first appointment of school masters in 'Municipal or Local board-schools be left to the town or District boards, with the proviso that the masters be certificated or approved by the Dept. and their subsequent promotion or removal be regulated by the boards, subject to the approval of the Dept.
- 33) That the cost of maintaining or aiding primary schools in each school district, and the construction and repair of board school-houses, be charged against the Municipal or Local Board school-fund so created.
- 34) That the vernacular, in which instruction shall be imparted in any primary school; maintained by any Municipal or Local Board, be determined by the school committee of management, subject to revision by the Municipal or Local Board : provided that if there be any dissenting minority in the community, who represent a number of pupils sufficient to form one or more separate classes or schools, it shall be incumbent on the Department to provide for the establishment of such classes or schools, and it shall be incumbent on such Municipal or Local Board to assign to such classes or schools a fair proportion of the whole assignable funds.
- 35) That Municipal and Local boards administering funds in aid of primary schools adopt the rules prescribed by the Department for aiding such schools and introduce no change therein without the sanction of the Department.

Source : *Indian Education Commission Report*, 1882, pp. 586, 587.

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CHAPTER VI
APPENDIX A
THE DETAILED SYLLABUS

Note—It is of the utmost importance that all objects which are used to illustrate the courses of instruction in vernacular schools should be selected from materials or things that are commonly found in every school, or which can be obtained in every village without difficulty and without cost. This rule applies to objects which are to be used for the training of the senses in the infant classes, and for object-lessons etc., and also as far as possible to those used in the teaching of the science of every-day life.

INFANT CLASS

The following 'Kindergarten' and 'Object-lesson' subjects shall be prescribed for the first stage of instruction before the children are allowed to begin to learn their letters or to learn to read, etc. :—

First Period of Infant Class—One Year's Course. Age about 5 years.

A—Kindergarten and Object-lessons for training children by observation of impressions obtained through the senses—

1. Through the eye :

(a) Lessons on Form—

Curved lines

Lines, straight and crooked.

Ball-shaped bodies.

(b) Lessons on colour—

Black and white substances

Yellow and red substances

Blue and green substances

2. Through the hand :

Things, hard and soft
 Things, rough and smooth
 Things, heavy and light
 Things, brittle and tough.

3. Through sense of taste :

Things, sweet and sour
 Things, pungent or hot, sour, salt and bitter.

B—Object-lessons on things of everyday life, such as a flat board or a piece of wood, a box, a stool or chair, a table or school desk ; also very simple object-lessons about plants, growing and flowering, indicating the root, the stem, the leaves, the flowers, etc., and their simple uses, and showing that a plant must be watered for it to continue to live.

Very simple lessons about the human body—

Parts of the body—the head, arms, legs, hands and feet.

What the body is made of (bones and flesh).

C—Training of hand and eye :

Drawing of curved, straight, and crooked lines.

Drawing of squares and oblongs, circles and figures like circles bounded by curved lines.

D—Very simple lessons as to different kinds of animals :

Some animals walk only

Some animals have 2, 4, and more legs

Some animals crawl

Some animals fly

Some animals swim

Some animals walk and fly

Some animals walk and fly and swim

Necessity of kindness to domestic animals

Kindness of children to one another.

E—From the object-lessons on the leaves of trees and on the hands and feet, etc., the idea of numbers can be readily introduced, and from numbers to addition, subtraction, and simple mental arithmetic.

F—The children are to be allowed to learn to write the numerals about this stage.

G—The children must be trained daily in simple physical exercises and in action songs.

H—Kindergarten occupations such as stick-laying, etc.

Second period of Infant Class—One Year's Course. Age about 6 years.

A—Training through the senses—

1. Through the eye :

(a) Lessons on Form—

Extension of lesson given in first period

Also lessons on angles and on triangles of various shapes

Also lessons on cube and brick-shaped bodies.

(b) Lessons on colour—

Extension of lessons given in first period

Grey, orange, purple, brown

2. Through the hand :

Extension of lessons given in first period, showing various degrees of the properties then tested.

3. Through sense of taste :

Extension of lessons given in first period.

4. Through the ear :

Sounds, loud and soft

Sounds, pleasant and unpleasant

Different animals give different sounds

Sounds of pain, sounds of pleasure

Sounds give spoken language

5. Through the organs of smell :

Pure air has no smell.

Air which has smell is not pure.

Sweet or pleasant smells of flowers.

Unpleasant smell of rotting or decaying vegetation.

Unpleasant smell of rotting or decaying animal matter.

Air with bad smell is unhealthy to breathe.

6. Lessons on size and measurement :

Length, breadth, and thickness.

Measures of length, both vernacular measures, and the yard, foot and inch.

B—The following object lessons on common things :

1. On a stool or chair
2. On a slate and pencil
3. On a book
4. On a tree and its fruit
5. On a mango and plantain
6. On seeds
7. On grass
8. On a plant yielding fibres which the children can extract.
9. On the parts of the human body in greater detail than in the first period.
10. On a cat.

C—The hand and eye should be again trained by simple drawing exercises of the same character as those in the first period; but rather more advanced, with the drawing of triangles, rectangles, pentagons, etc., in addition.

Tracing outlines of leaves of plants of various shapes and of other flat bodies on slates. Leaves of plants may be pressed between sheets of paper (old newspapers) to make them lie quite flat.

After tracing a leaf or other flat object on the slate, the pupil should be required to make a free hand copy of his own diagram by the side of it, and compare it and correct it by placing the original object over it. This would help to train the eye and would fix the form of the object more clearly in the memory than simple tracing would do.

D—At this period the children are to begin to learn their letters, etc., and to write the letters of the alphabet and to form short words and also learn writing of *shatika*, *kara* and *ganda*.

E—Additional arithmetical exercises, notation up to 100 ; multiplication tables 10×10 ; simple addition, subtraction and multiplication. Slates may be used for the simple arithmetic.

F—Short pieces of poetry should be committed to memory. Some of these should teach morality and the duties of children.

G—Simple physical exercises and action songs.

H—Kindergarten occupations such as stick-laying, seed-work, etc.

Third Period of Infant Class—One Year's Course

(Equal to standard B of former Primary course). Age about 7 years

A—Training through the senses—

1. Through the eye :

(a) Lessons on form should include the notions of perpendicular, horizontal, oblique, parallel lines, the circle, sphere, cylinder, prisms, pyramid, and cone.

(b) Lessons on colour should deal with dark and light colours, and with the varying shades of such colour as red, blue, green, yellow, etc. Primary and secondary colours. browns, greys, etc.

(c) Lessons on the four cardinal points.

2. Determination of weights with the use of bazaar scales.

3. Elementary notions about time should be given (indigenous and European), to include the year, month, week, day, hour and minute, also division of the year into seasons.

B—Object lessons :

1. Further lessons about plants—

Seeds to be sown and grown to form plants.

Object-lessons on plants, such as pumpkin, and on vegetables, such as brinjal, beans, etc., for food.

2. Further lessons about the human body—the blood, the brain, the skin.

3. Object-lessons about birds (pigeon, duck).

Simple lessons about the cow.

4. Object-lessons on vessels—

An earthen pot

A water glass or a bottle

A brass lotah or a brass plate (thala).

5. Object lessons on common metals
Object lessons on coins, copper and silver
Object lessons on nails, screws
Object lessons on a knife
Object lessons on a key for a lock.
6. Object lessons about plants yielding fibres, more advanced than in the previous stage. The use of various fibres in the manufacture of cloth for clothing.

C—Drawing (Hand and Eye-training) :

Drawing on slates, of rather more advanced character than in the two previous stages.

Drawing outlines of leaves, etc., from memory must be practised.

D—Arithmetic and writing—

Addition, subtraction and multiplication, notation up to 10,000 ; writing *buri, pan, chok, katha, bigha, ser, and man*. Writing short words, etc. from dictation.

E—Verses on the duties of children should be committed to memory and recited. The reading of simple printed and written language should be commenced.

F—School drill also to be included.

G—Needlework (for girls only)—Hemming.

H—Kindergarten occupations such as stick-laying, seed-work, paper-folding, etc.

STANDARD I

One Year's Course (corresponding to the 'A' class of Lower Primary School). Age about 8 years.

Class Subjects—Reading, Writing (as at present), Arithmetic (as at present), Object-lessons and a Primer, with Drawing (Hand and Eye training), Manual Work, Needlework for girls, and School Drill.

Writing—To write from dictation ; to write more complex words and sentences and an ordinary letter to a senior relative.

Arithmetic—First four simple rules, including mental operation ;

country tables of money, weights, measure and land measure ;
mankasa, serkasa, sonakasa, masmahina.

Object-lessons (5 pages)—

The Sky.

Sunrise, noon, sunset—The children are to note with references to the school-house or village the object over which the sun rises or sets from month to month, and to note also the sun's position at noon, and its varying height above the horizon. Shadow—The pupils are to notice by aid of an upright stick on a flat piece of ground the varying length of the shadow month by month.

Moon—Note its changes. The pupils should draw the shape of the illuminated portion week by week.

Day and Night—Varying length of day and night at different seasons to be noted, and connected with the varying position of the sun as determined at rising and setting and at noon.

The Primer for this class will contain :

A—Botany (5 pages) :

1. A broad sketch of the plant in reference to its three principal parts—the root, the stem, and the leaf.
2. Talk about a seedling.
3. Distinction between root and stem—Observe the germination of seed. One part grows upwards—the stem, and the other downward—the root. If a growing plant be placed in an inverted position for some time, observe that the stem will bend and grow upwards and the root in the contrary direction. (A germinating pea placed upside down will show this.)

B—Natural History (10 pages)—Habits and general description of the following domestic animals with anecdotes : the cow, the cat, and the dog, incidentally illustrating what is meant by herbivorous and carnivorous animals, their offensive and defensive weapons.

C—Agriculture (10 pages) for country schools, for boys only—Alternative with Physics and Chemistry. Necessaries of life :

Variety desirable as a protection against failure of crops. Objects required—specimens of cereals, pulses, oil-seeds, vegetables, sugar, salt, milk, fibres, straw, bamboos, timber, spices.

D—Physics (5 pages) for town schools, for boys only—The following lesson is to be in the form of conversation :—Solid substances, and some of their properties—Take a solid and show that it has a definite shape. This shape cannot be easily altered. Porous bodies—Take a piece of charcoal and show the pores. Examine also a piece of unglazed pottery. Water percolates through the pores. Examine blotting paper. Liquids and some of their properties—As example take water. It has no shape of its own ; it takes the shape of the vessel in which it is poured. It breaks into drops. It flows down. Fill a bottle full of water. Try to cork it. The water is difficult to compress. Solids are converted into liquids by heating, liquids are converted into solids by cooling. Observe how coconut oil becomes solidified in winter.

E—Chemistry (4 pages) for town schools, for boys only—Lesson on solubility : Take a pinch of common salt, sugar, and finely powdered chalk respectively in a tumbler, and add the same volume of water to each and stir with a rod. Observe the appearance of the liquids : the water with the salt and sugar is perfectly clear ; that containing the chalk is milky. Now pass the liquid through filter papers. Observe that the milkiness in the last has now disappeared. Taste them one by one. The water containing the salt has a brackish taste ; that which was poured over the sugar has a sweetish taste, whilst that which was treated with chalk has no taste whatever. Evaporate the liquids in succession in earthenware or enamelled cups. The water evaporates off slowly, and at last we have a residue of salt and sugar ; but the water which was similarly treated with chalk leaves nothing behind.

F—Hygiene (8 pages), for boys only—

Food—Its necessity. Evils of under-feeding and over-feeding.

Ordinary articles of food, including meat, eggs, milk, fruits.

Drink—Pure water how obtained. Causes of impurities in water.

Air—Necessity of pure air. Causes of its impurities. How to purify the air of dwelling-houses.

Sunlight—its necessity in dwelling-houses.

F—(a)—Domestic Economy (8 pages), for girls only—

Bathing—Anointing the body before bathing. Bathing as a means of cleaning the body. Bathing of little children.

Dress—Dress capable of improvement. Clothes to be washed and kept clean. Children's clothes to be changed frequently.

The kitchen—Should be kept clean. Removal of refuse.

Scrubbing the floor and cleaning walls and the ceiling.

Admission of light and air into the kitchen.

G—Drawing (Hand and Eye-training)—Half the first part (of the four parts) of the Indian Drawing Books prepared in the School of Art: A set of Indian drawing copies has recently been supplied by a drawing book in four parts prepared by order of the Government of India. With some additional examples and a carefully-prepared set of instructions for teachers, the first book would be suitable for use in lower primary schools. The examples would have to be enlarged, mounted on pasteboard and varnished. These enlarged examples would be hung in front of the class and copied by the students on their slates, so that one set would be sufficient for each school. The only expense would be the cost of one book for the teacher and one set of examples for each school. The examples would be of so simple a character that any intelligent teacher by the help of the printed instructions would be able to direct the class in the correct method of drawing them. One page of directions regarding Drawing is to be included in the Science Primer.

H—Manual Training, for boys only—Leaf and Paper work. Leaves (palm, etc.)—Making fans of different kinds, whistles, ornamental designs, baskets. Paper—paper-folding, paper-modelling, such as caps, boats, and other toys, ink-pots, pen-cases, etc., flying kites, flowers, garlands, slings, lanterns, etc., etc., envelopes. Two pages of the Reader to contain directions about Manual Training

H—(a) Needlework (for girls) ÷ Top-sewing or seaming.

I—Verses teaching the duties of children. (Two pages at the end of the Primer).

J—School Drill;

STANDARD II

(corresponding to former Lower Primary standard)

Age about 9 years

Class Subjects—Reading, Writing, Arithmetic, Object-lessons and a Primer, with Drawing (Hand and Eye-training), Manual work ; Needlework for girls, and School Drill (Book containing instructions in Drill to be prepared).

Writing—Revision of subjects of Standard I ; writing out forms of *pattahs*, *kabuliyats*, rent-receipts.

Arithmetic—Revision of subjects of Standard I and compound rules ; accounts of bazaar purchases, calculation of prices, including mental operations ; *bighakali*, *kathakali*, *jamabandi*.

Object Lessons (5 pages) :—

The Air

Winds—The pupils should record the varying directions of the winds from season to season, or day, to day also note that some winds are warm, some cold, that some bring rain and some dry weather.

Air—Contains moisture or water vapour shown by two classes of facts—(a) clothes left out in open air at night become damp and wet, salt becomes damp and wet during rainy season, i. e., vapour from air is turned into water, and (b) pools of water and tanks dry up in wind and sun, wet clothes become dry when hung in wind and sun, i. e., the water in them turns into vapour. Human breath contains vapour, and this turns to water when a cold slate is breathed upon, or on a cold morning breath becomes visible owing to water being formed from the vapour in it.

Surface of Lands—The meaning of the term plains, valleys, hills, etc., must be explained, and the teacher should make models in clay, sand, etc., to illustrate the meaning of such terms.

The Reader for this class will contain—

A—Botany (5 pages):

Root of a plant—Function of the root (1) to hold the plant ; (2) to supply food. Examine different kinds of roots.

Distinguish between the main roots and rootlets—

Fibrous roots—grass.

Fleshy roots—radish, beet.

Adventitious roots—banyan.

B—Natural History (.10 pages)—

General description of the members of the cat family with anecdotes.

Mammals—The cat, chosen as a type—external configuration—round face—arrangement and disposition of the hair—habits.

Examination of the paw : (a) under surface ; the fleshy pad—the retractile claws—when excited the claws are drawn out of the protecting sheath and the hair stands on end—mode of seizing prey.

The pupil of the cat's eye : almost a vertical line in broad daylight—in the dark it expands.

The cat : its maternal instincts—attitude of the male cat towards the offspring.

The tiger : only a big cat.

C—Agriculture (8 pages), alternative with Physics and Chemistry for village schools, for boys only—A lesson on rice and a lesson on oilseeds.

D—Physics (5 pages), for boys only—

Gases and some of their properties—Blow into water through a tube ; you see something bubbling up.

Blow against your hand ; you feel a current of air.

Gases cannot be kept in an open-mouthed vessel.

Gases are easily compressible.

Resume of the general properties of matter (ice, water and steam).

Divisibility of matter.

Gravity.

E—Chemistry (4 pages), for boys only—

Further lessons about solubility :

Take some lime in a bottle, fill half the bottle with water, cork it tightly, and violently agitate the contents. Allow to settle overnight. Next day carefully decant off the clear liquid; note the alkaline nature of the water ; divide it into two portions ; blow into one by means of a tube of bamboo or some kind of reed. Observe how the water turns milky ; the lime which was in solution has now been rendered insoluble and thus precipitated. Pass the milky water through a filter. The water is now colourless and devoid of taste.

(Cf. Lessons on the chemistry of a candle).

Treat similarly powdered alum, sulphate of copper, charcoal, sand, etc., and find out which of the above are soluble and which insoluble in water.

F—Hygiene (8 pages), for boys only—

Cleanliness and dress—Bathing : its necessity. How to keep clean. How to keep the house clean. Use of dress. Different articles used for weaving cloths.

Exercise and rest, including change of air.

Epidemics—How to check their spread.

F—(a)—Domestic Economy (8 pages), for girls—

Cooking—Cleanliness to be observed. Cleaning of utensils.

Supply of good water for cooking food.

Articles to be properly prepared and washed before cooking.

Food to be prepared and kept covered as far as possible. Rice to be cooked last and eaten before it gets cold. Variety in food.

Bed-room—Day sleep to be avoided. Regular hours of sleep.

Over-crowding in rooms injurious. Use of mosquito curtains.

Ventilation of rooms. Bedding of infants to be changed when soiled.

Bed-clothes and pillows to be aired, and sunned and washed.

G—Drawing (Hand & Eye-training)—

Second half of first part of the School of Art Drawing Book.

H—Manual Training (for boys only)—

Exercises in clay modelling.

Construction of pots, country lamps, other household articles, models of fruits and playthings.

One page of directions regarding Manual Training is to be included in the Science Primer.

H—(a)—Needlework for girls—

Running and felling and back-stitching.

I—Verses teaching morality and duties of children (3 pages).

J—School Drill.

Source : *Education Proceedings* 14-18, File 1E-3, October 1900.

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